

REVIEW ON KAYACHIKITSA (INTERNAL MEDICINE) AS AN IMPORTANT SPECIALITY IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science which deals with the Ayu (Life) of all human beings. Kayachikitsa is one of the most important branch/speciality among primary eight branches of Ayurveda. In Ayurveda, Kayachikitsa is such a unique branch which deals with 'Kaya' meaning 'Sharira (body)/Mana (mind)/Antaragni (Digestive fire)' and 'Chikitsa' meaning 'treatment'. It deals with diseases suffering entire body and mind so, it is correlated to Internal Medicine in modern medicine. It is described as the superior branch of Astanga Ayurveda and it is given prime importance due to its wide field of application in diagnosis and treatment of various diseases affecting human beings. Kayachikitsa is a very important and leading speciality in Ayurveda. So, considering this fact, we summarize about Kayachikitsa speciality and its importance in this article.

KEY WORDS

Ayurveda, Kayachikitsa, Speciality, Internal Medicine, Astanga Ayurveda

INTRODUCTION

Kayachikitsa is the precious branch of Astanga Ayurveda which deals with the knowledge of aetiology, signs and symptoms, pathogenesis along with principles of

treatment of diseases affecting our body and mind. Kayachikitsa is made up of two words 'Kaya' and 'Chikitsa'. Here, 'Kaya' means 'Sharira (body), Mana (mind) and Antaragni (Digestive fire)' as a whole, whereas 'Chikitsa' means 'treatment'. It can be correlated to Internal Medicine in modern medicine.¹ The practice of Ayurveda is comprised of two schools i.e medicine and surgery in ancient times. Kayachikitsa represents the school of medicine and forms the basis for all other branches of Ayurvedic treatment. Kayachikitsa deals with different diseases like *Jwar* (Fever), *Atisar* (Diarrhoea), *Raktapitta* (Bleeding disorders), *Sosha* (Tuberculosis), mental illnesses like *Unmada* (Mania), *Apasmar* (Epilepsy), *Kustha* (different skin diseases) and *Prameha* (Diabetes) etc.² Kayachikitsa describes how to treat diseases caused by impairment of nutrition and metabolism, through correction of affected Dosha, Dhatu and Antaragni.³ It is concerned towards promoting an ideal health by holistic approach of healing body and mind through its principles of treatment .

Causes of Diseases⁴

Asatmendriyārtha samyoga: The hyper, hypo and perverse relationship of artha (objects) with the indriya (sense organs) destroy the equilibrium condition of sharirika and manasika dosha.

Pragyaparadha: Volitional transgressions and error in judgement

Parinama: Seasonal or Meteorological crisis

Different modalities of treatment in Kayachikitsa speciality⁵

Aparisankheya chikitsa: As diseases are countless, treatment is also countless.

Ekavidha chikitsa

Nidana par ivarjana: Removal of the causative factors of the disease is itself a treatment.

Pathya sevana: Eating healthy food and practicing healthy life styles and avoiding the unhealthy ones according to the disease is called Pathya sevana.

Dwividha chikitsa

Viparita Chikitsa/Shita- Ushna Upachar: Hot- Cold Therapy

Santarpana- Apararpana Chikitsa: Nourishing- Lightening Therapy

Samsodhana- Samshamana (Purificatory- Pacifying Treatment)

Ojaskara/Urjaskara- Rogaghna (Treatment for the promotion of Oja or Immunity and to cure the disease)

Rasayana-Vajikarana Chikitsa: It is the subtype of Ojaskar chikitsa.

Rasayana Therapy ensures Dirghayu (Longevity), promotion of Smriti

(Memory), Medha (Intelligence), increases Vyadhi Kshamatwa (Immunity against diseases), Vayasthapanana (preservation of youth, lustre, complexion and voice).

Vajikarana Therapy promotes virility, strength, prosperity, fame and offer healthy offspring.

Prasamana- Apunarbhava Chikitsa: It is the subtype of Rogaghna chikitsa

Prasamana chikitsa means dosha pacifying treatment methods

Apunarbhava chikitsa means those treatment procedures which prevent the recurrence of the disease.

Dravyabhuta- Adravyabhuta Chikitsa:

Dravyabhuta chikitsa deals with treatment of various disorders through dravya like drugs, medicines which are given internally. It is the conventional method of treatment.

Adravyabhuta chikitsa is a drugless treatment method where different tricks are used to treat the diseases like yoga, dhyana (meditation), marma chikitsa, vyayama etc.

Trividha chikitsa:

Daivavyapashraya-Yuktivyapashraya-Satwavajaya chikitsa

Daivavyapashraya chikitsa is a spiritual therapy like mantra, wearing mani, yagya, upavasa, homa, puja etc.

Yuktivyapashraya chikitsa includes all the therapeutic measures which help to bring dosha-dushya involvement in healthy condition in any disease like samana, sodhana, nidanaparivarjana measures etc.

Satwavajaya chikitsa implies therapeutics for mental or emotional disturbances like Dhi (Knowledge), Dhairya (patience), Aatmadi vigyana (Self-realization) etc.

Hetuviparita-Vyadhiviparita-Ubhayarthakari Chikitsa

Hetuviparita chikitsa means treatment which is opposite to cause of disease.

Vyadhiviparita chikitsa means treatment which is opposite to disease.

Ubhayarthakari chikitsa means treatment opposite to both cause and disease.

Chaturvidha chikitsa

Samshodhan-Samshaman-Ahara-Achara

Samsodhan means purificatory procedures.

Samshaman means pacification therapy.

Ahara means foods which are good for the disease.

Acharya means those good behavioral and social aspect which one should follow in certain disease.

Panchavidha Chikitsa

Panchakarma: Panchakarma chikitsa means five purificatory procedures i.e., Vamana (Therapeutic vomiting), Virechana (Therapeutic purgation), Niruha Vasti (Giving medicinal decoction through anus), Anuvasana Vasti (Giving oil-based medicine through anus), Nasya (Pouring medicines through nostrils)

Divisions of Kayachikitsa⁶

- Agni chikitsa (Treatment of Metabolic disorders)
- Ama Pachana (Autoimmune disorders)
- Samsodhana/ Panchakarma (Purification/ Penta-Detoxification Therapy)
- Manasa roga chikitsa (Psychiatrics)
- Rasayana (Rejuvenation)
- Vajikarana (Aphrodisiacs)
- Sankramaka roga (Treatment of Infectious diseases)
- Janapadodhwamsa (Treatment of Environmental pollution/ Endemics/ Pandemics)
- Twak/ Kshudra roga chikitsa (Dermatology)

Importance of Kayachikitsa

Kayachikitsa is a very important and leading specialization in Ayurveda field.⁷ There was the system of specialization even in ancient times in the field of medicine.

Among the eight branches of Ayurveda, Kayachikitsa is the most important one and is a prerequisite for all other specializations.¹ It is such a special branch which is as deep as sea and as broad as sky.⁸ It is given prime importance and described in the first position among Astanga Ayurveda due to its wide field of application in various diseases. Vagbhata explained the importance of Kayachikitsa as '*Nitya upayogi*' i.e. useful in daily life, '*Durbhedyam*' i.e. difficult to understand and '*Sarvanga Vyapi*' i.e. it is inter-spread over all other branches of Ayurveda and it deals with ailments related to all organs.⁹

Even in present days, Kayachikitsa speciality is in optimum use for the treatment of various illness of people. Kayachikitsa deals with the principles and methods of diagnosis and treatment of a variety of disorders like skin disorders, metabolic disorders like Diabetes, Hypertension, Obesity, Dyslipidemia, Fatty Liver and other lifestyle disorders, general medical disorders, Arthritis and Joint disorders, *Rasayana* (Geriatric medicine), *Vajikarana* (Aphrodisiac medicine) etc. Charaka Samhita is the

most important scripture of kayachikitsa. A recent study also showed that people visited Kayachikitsa department of an Ayurveda Hospital in Nepal to treat various chronic diseases, non-communicable diseases and life style disorders.¹⁰

According to Charaka samhita and Astanga Hridaya, innumerable diseases and disease syndromes are produced due to the imbalance in the harmony of *Sharirika dosha* (*vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*) and *Manasika dosha* (*Raja*, *Tama*) in the body.^{11,12} Kaya chikitsa provides several measures to maintain the balance between these dosha. Moreover, it is also concerned with the measures to maintain a Psycho-somatic equilibrium between the Sharirik (somatic) and Manasik (psychic) components of a person.¹³ It also discusses the basic methods of treatment by *Shamana* (pacification) and *Sodhana* (purification/detoxification methods), *Ahara* and *Aachara*. Curing the disease can be attained through shamana (pacification) and shodhana (purification/detoxification) chikitsa, shaman chikitsa pacify the morbid doshas, whereas shodhan expels the accumulated dosha.

Ayurveda has discussed six stages of a disease, which includes *Sanchaya* (aggravation), *Prakopa* (accumulation), *Prasara* (overflow), *Sthana-samshraya* (relocation); *Vyakti* (build up in a new site) and *Bheda* (manifestation into a recognizable disease). Kayachikitsa deals with various measures to stop any disease in any of the six stages of disease¹⁴. One of the most important treatment methods followed by kayachikitsa is panchakarma, which helps in purification and detoxification of body and maintain the harmony of dosha to attain good health, calmness of mind and happiness in life.

Kayachikitsa uses several herbal, mineral and natural therapies to treat various ailments. The role of mind in the causation and cure of diseases is well recognized in kayachikitsa, hence due importance is given to strict mental discipline and adherence to moral values. For that purpose, *Manasaroga* is described in kayachikitsa.

The basic principles of Kayachikitsa provide ways for the management of diseases related to the disturbed pattern of life style i.e. metabolic disorders which is the main factor of Non-communicable disease. The Kayachikitsa helps to manage various metabolic disorders including; obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol, fatty liver, diabetes and digestive problems.¹⁵ Uses of various internal medicines is done in Kayachikitsa for the management of ageing or geriatric care. The drugs and other approaches of Kayachikitsa improve skin luster, vision, vitality, cardio functioning, metabolic activities, functioning of nervous system and regularizes excretory system in elderly person.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Kayachikitsa treats the patient as a whole by dealing not only human body but also mind and digestive fire. This branch of Ayurveda brings the equilibrium condition in endogenous factors of body like dosha, dhatu, mala and antaragni through different measures like internal medicines, purificatory procedures or satwavajaya chikitsa cor

Psychiatric disorders. Among other specializations in Ayurveda, Kayachikitsa is prime and its field of action is wide without which all remaining speciality wings will not exist. The pervuew of Kayachikitsa is broad as it deals with all systemic disorders, nutritional, metabolic, endocrinal, psychiatric, endogenous, congenital as well as hereditary disorders. Thus, Kayachikitsa is an important and super specialization in Ayurveda which is very comon and useful in simple to complex health problems.

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