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ROLE OF SWASTHAVRITTA IN AYURVEDA FOR HEALTHY LIFE IN CURRENT PANDEMIC COVID-19

Dr Mahesh M. Rathod¹ & Dr. Bhairav B. Tawshikar Kulkarni²

¹Associate Professor, Swasthvrutt Deptt. , Yashwantrao Chavan Ayurvedic Medical College, Aurangabad

²Associate Professor, Kayachikitsa Deptt, Yashwantrao Chavan Ayurvedic Medical College, Aurangabad

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Email: drmaheshrathod2008@rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda suggests specific lifestyle and some natural therapies to maintain balances of body and mind. Internal purification, herbal remedies, Yoga and meditation, etc. are some approaches of Ayurveda which helps to retain optimum health. Ayurveda eliminate impurities, increases resistance, balances natural harmony and boost immunity thus helps to prevent prevalence of infectious diseases. In the present article we are discussing regarding the *Swasthavritta* in Ayurveda for healthy life in present COVID 19 pandemic.

Keywords: Swasthavritta , COVID 19.

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INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic is unique and unprecedented in several aspects and has challenged health care systems. At present, the global momentum is unabated, and a second wave is anticipated.¹ The experience and lessons learnt from the earlier severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemics appear inadequate and call for better approaches and strategies in public health and medical care. Conventional mainstream medicine is at the forefront when it comes to curbing this menace, especially at the critical care stage. The current prophylactic measures are insufficient, and suggested options such as hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) are still under investigation.^{2,3} The prophylactic and therapeutic potential of traditional and complementary medicine systems such as Ayurveda and Yoga is not really being considered during this crisis and global hunt for effective preventive and treatment measures. In this commentary, we have attempted to highlight the knowledge and practices from Ayurveda and Yoga that might be effectively utilized in the prophylaxis and adjuvant therapy of COVID-19. Several of our recommendations in this paper are driven by the emerging dynamics of the causative organism SARS coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and the unravelling of the pathophysiology of COVID-19.⁴ While we focus here on prophylaxis and the protection of vulnerable target organs, Ayurveda and Yoga as an add-on therapy may support patients of COVID-19 by improving the quality of standard care.

General Overview on COVID-19 The pathological condition Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) arises due to the infection of Corona viruses which also known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus-2 (SARS-CoV2). World Health Organization considered COVID19 as outbreak a pandemic. The major symptoms of disease are fever, cough and breathing difficulty. Tiredness, runny nose, aches, sore throat and headache also occurs sometimes. The severity of symptoms varies from mild to severe and depends upon health status of person. Elderly people, person with heart disease, lung disease and diabetes may be at higher risk of fatal illness. The disease mainly spreads through close contact, spreads by droplets released by infected person during coughing and sneezing. The virus also spread through surface if person touches surface with virus and uses same hand for touching his/her mouth and nose then disease may occurs.

Sometimes disease may associates with complications like Pneumonia and organ failure. General Guideline for Prevention the general guideline to prevent spread are as follows:

- One should avoid social gatherings and unnecessary travelling.
 - Close contact with infected person must be avoided.
 - Washing of hands with soap frequently.
 - Uses of alcohol based sanitizer regularly.
 - Covering of mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing.
 - One should avoid touching of nose, mouth and eyes.
 - Infected person must be isolated or quarantined from common peoples.
 - One should maintain hygienic condition regularly.
- Ayurveda Suggestions

Swasthviritta is one of the important aspects of ayurveda which described way of healthy living; the general considerations of Swasthviritta are as follows:

- Pratarutthanam
- Ushapana / Achaman
- Dantadhavan
- Gandush
- Nasyakarm
- Practicing Yoga, etc.

Pratarutthanam Good Conduction of Dincharya starts with Pratarutthanam means to get up early in the morning before sunrise. It imparts refreshing and rejuvenating effects, boosts immunity and improves capacity of lungs thus help in respiratory distress.

Ushapana/Achaman

Ushapana/Achaman means cleaning or washing of hands and feet which also recommended by health organization to prevent COVID-19 infections. Ushapana/Achaman (washing of hands) helps to reduce risk of infections through the hands. Dantadhavan Dantadhavan means cleaning of teeth and tongue using Arka, Nimba and Karanja, Dantadhavan helps to remove accumulated filth, it may reduce susceptibility of infections, maintain hygienic conditions of mouth and throat.

Dantadhavan cleans mouth and throat therefore enhances respiratory functioning thus help to prevent throat infections and other respiratory diseases.

Gandush Gandush means gargling or cleaning of oral cavity and throat with lukewarm. This technique also recommended by health organizations which may help to reduce susceptibility towards the respiratory infections.

Gandush helps to prevent diseases of oral cavity, sore throat and other throat infections, etc. It is suggested to take Gandush and Kawal using sesame or coconut oil followed by use of warmwater, this procedure can be done twice a day to relieve throat problems.

Nasyakarm Nasyakarm means uses of nasal medication into each nostril in morning time. This techniques cleans nasal pathways, prevent infections, alleviates throat distress and clear nasal congestion thus can be used as preventing measure to reduce risk of current pandemic infectious diseases.

Pratimarsh nasya advised daily which can be done using nasal application of sesame oil in nostrils to clear nasal and respiratory passage.

Yoga

Yoga helps to increase blood circulation, efficiency of lungs, resistance against diseases and imparts mental strength thus helps to combat against infectious disease. The health organization also recommended Yoga and exercise to boost immunity against current pandemic infectious disease. The above mentioned approaches of Swasthviritta can help to fight against infections and may reduce susceptibility against pandemic outbreaks. The other approaches of Swasthviritta like Snana and Dhyanam also provides health benefits in such types of conditions. The Snana means bathing which help to maintain general hygiene and keeps away from infections. Similarly Dhyanam means meditation which imparts mental strength and provide psychological relaxation which is very important when pandemic infections deteriorate mental status of peoples.

The eyes, nose, and mouth are the main portals of entry of droplets carrying the SARS-COV-2. Prior to the final assault in the lungs, the virus gains access to the throat region and stays for some hours. The fatty acid coat of the virus adheres to the moist mucosal layers, which helps it gain entry into the cells by binding to specific cell receptors. Ayurveda classics mention several interventions that are likely to target these entry portals.¹¹ This may help to improve the innate immunologic response of the mucus membranes and may thus inhibit the virus transmission to the lungs. These measures may hence function as “physiological masks” barricading the viral invasion. The general measures for respiratory illnesses described in Ayurvedic texts¹² such as consumption of hot water, hot food, and herbal decoctions, gargling with medicated water, steam inhalation, and local applications may be helpful for symptomatic relief in mild cases.

Nasal oil application

Ayurveda recommends the application of medicated oils made from butter oil (Ghee) and vegetable oils such as sesame or coconut in the nostrils. This may protect the respiratory tract from pathogen entry. This procedure known as *nasya* is well described in Ayurveda.⁶ Application of pure sesame oil was found to be effective for the treatment of dry nasal mucosa.²³ Similar to gargles and mouth rinses, nasal oil application possibly forms a biofilm and can help as a barrier to the entry of the virus particles. Researchers of Traditional Chinese Medicine have already proposed the use of nasal oil application for preventing SARS-COV-2 infection.²⁴

Steam inhalation

Steam inhalation and hot fomentation (with aromatic oils such as menthol)

provide satisfactory clinical relief in nasal and throat congestion, bronchoconstriction, headache, and sinusitis. Its role in improving nasal conditioning, improving nasal mucus velocity, and reducing congestion and inflammation has been reported in several clinical studies.^{25–27}

Systemic Prophylaxis

Ayurveda advocates several non-pharmacological measures that are critical to overall health, including diet, sleep, mental relaxation, lifestyle behavior, and Yoga. Several studies have endorsed the role of Yoga breathing techniques (pranayama), postures (asanas), and procedures (yogic kriya) in improving lung health and exercise tolerance.^{28,29} The recommended daily diet³⁰ includes fresh hot soups of vegetables (radish, trigonella leaves, drum stick vegetable pods) and pulses (lentils, green gram/mung beans, chickpeas) seasoned with spices such as ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), garlic (*Allium sativum*), cumin seeds (*Cuminum cyminum*), and mustard (*Brassica nigra*) seeds (black whole mustard).

Rasayanas as Immunomodulators

Rasayana, a specialty of Ayurveda, deals with measures for rejuvenation. Rasayana therapy comprises lifestyle, diet, and medicine that have properties to enhance growth, retard aging, induce tissue regeneration, and stimulate immunity. Due to its effects on improving immunity, Rasayana therapy may have direct relevance to the prophylaxis and management of SARS-COV-2 infection. The botanicals used in Rasayana therapy have been found to be effective in immunomodulation and restoration of immune haemostasis.³¹ Shi et al.³² described the immune response to SARS-COV-2 infection in two phases. The first protective phase of adaptive immune response in the host that may

eliminate the virus in a large proportion of subjects. In relatively few cases, the viral infection progresses, causing intense release of pro-inflammatory cytokines (cytokine storm). The cytokine storm results in severe inflammation, leading to lung damage and co-attendant multi-organ failure. Thus, although antivirals are important, a robust and well-contained immune response to maintain immune homeostasis will be critical for good recovery and reduced mortality. This requires a favorable Th1/Th2 cytokine balance.

DISCUSSION

Modern medical care and health systems are being tested to the hilt for effective management of COVID-19. However, there are several gaps. We must remember the basic principle in medicine that "prevention is better than cure." The simple and feasible measures based on Ayurveda and Yoga could be quickly advertised in public-health campaigns through electronic and print media and information brochures for public distribution and display at prominent locations. The Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, has already issued a very useful advisory in this context. People are overstressed by the compulsions of social distancing and physical barrier methods. They are likely to find comfort and support in some of the deeply rooted traditional practices that may protect them from the infection and its associated debilitating conditions. Noticeably, these interventions have the advantages of simplicity, affordability, and acceptability and appear promising as feasible measures for large-scale implementation. Ayurveda, Yoga, and meditation have a potential role to engage the community in creating a more positive health environment. Admittedly, there is need for more research.

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