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## Hypothesis – life style derangement is the basic and foremost cause behind all the diseases

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### ABSTRACT

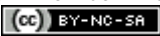
Lifestyle disorders are prevalent in most developed and developing societies on this planet. These are the ailments that primarily arise due to problems in day to day habits of people like late-night sleeping, reduced physical activity; pushes them towards sedentary lifestyle. Though Diabetes and Hypertension are popularly known as lifestyle disorders, nearly every disease is related to lifestyle derangement in daily routine. A popular verse, mentioned in this paper, from *Charak Samhita* (Ayurveda), supports this claim and explains the basic idea behind it. It concludes that regular intake of proper diet, careful balanced exercise and following the behavioral tips scrupulously stated in *Ayurvedic* literature can prevent most of the diseases. Further experimental researches can be recommended to obtain evidence in this regard.

**KEY WORDS:** Sedentary lifestyle, *Kaal*, *Arth*, *Karma*

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## INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle disorders are common in all societies. Lifestyle has become a topic of interest for many doctors globally over the past few decades. According to W.H.O., 60% of the factors responsible for an average individual's health and quality of life are correlated to lifestyle<sup>[1]</sup>. Lifestyle diseases are ailments that primarily arise as a consequence of inappropriate day to day habits of people. Habits that detract people from activity and push them towards a sedentary routine can cause a number of health issues that can lead to chronic non-communicable diseases and can have near life threatening outcomes. Other definitions may be 'Those health problems that have a direct relation to changes in daily routine'. With the continual and drastic changes brought about by urbanization, the mental aspect of health has been measurably affected (quite adversely), though the physical aspect has seen a general improvement. The increment in the general standards of living have brought about social pressures much higher than the ones felt before, and bearing these regularly take a toll on each one of us. As we struggle to cope with the pressures of work and survival today, we often compromise on diet, exercise, rest and relaxation; making convenient but poor choices. In the following paper life style derangement and development of poor habits would be discussed from the point of view of the author. The logics will be derived from the authentic texts of *Ayurveda*, a science that emphasizes on the life style and provides a holistic approach for the same.

### Literary Review (materials & methods):

Numerous researchers have been known to have paid special attention to this subject. Mukesh Sharma and P.K. Majumdar<sup>[2]</sup> worked upon occupational life style diseases, an emerging issue and concluded that western life style, largely characterized by convenience in all things, easily available and cheap food, T.V. and PCs to stimulate children as well as adults result in a huge decrease in overall health. An increased number of overweight, passive youngsters with life style diseases is one of the worst effects of that kind of lifestyle. Dariush D. Farhud<sup>[3]</sup> studied the impact of lifestyle on health and concluded that with just a look at existing studies in the domain, some key factors can be determined for healthy life style viz- a good diet, plenty of regular and subsequently quality sleep, sufficient study and learning, optimal sex, lowest possible substance abuse, thoughtful and mindful application of modern technology, sufficient exercise of the right kind, as low as possible medication abuse and timely recreation.

M.J. Pappachan<sup>[4]</sup> worked on spreading awareness about the increasing prevalence of lifestyle diseases

in mortality after studying about it in detail. He called it high time for action and concluded that encouragement of healthy lifestyle in the population would help to reduce the risks posed by the burden of life style diseases and MI (myocardial infarction) in India. Government and Non-Governmental agencies, along with individuals of the country should work together to achieve this goal. Garry Egger and John Dixan<sup>[5]</sup> worked on getting a broader perspective on the problem of lifestyle disorders, and explained that the problems in daily routine are brought about by not only the fault of the person, but also due to more distal determinants like social or economic policies in the country. They reviewed 21<sup>st</sup> Century Chronic diseases determinants and concluded that changing just the proximal and medial determinants like changing diet for treating obesity, when the underlying inflammatory processes may be related to more obscure determinants like a cycle of interrelated problems descending from sleep-deprivation, is unlikely to provide optimal health. Finally, a concentration on lifestyle through simply affecting the proximal and even medial determinants as defined here is unlikely to significantly influence the problem while the disease is caused dominantly by upstream (distal) determinants. A book on *Ayurveda* based on diet and lifestyle guidelines for prevention of cardiac diseases<sup>[6]</sup> described *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya* etc. in detail. The basics of the life style have been explored.

## DISCUSSION

All the above research is compatible with the definition of lifestyle disorders given in this paper. Usually, this topic is covered by developing a focus on Diabetes, Hypertension, Stroke, Hypothyroidism etc., but the Author has argued in this paper that *EVERY* disease is, in some significant part, a result of problems in lifestyle. It is worth noting that 'Lifestyle' is a combination of Diet, Activity and Emotionally intelligent behavior as said in a famous verse from *Ashtang Hridayam*<sup>[7]</sup>. "*Kaalarthkarmanaam Yogo Heenmithyati maatrakam, Samyagyogashch Vigeyo Rogaarogyaikaaranam.*"

(A.H. Su.1/19)

The literal meaning of the verse is that the perfect harmony of the climatic conditions, control over senses and mindful activities are the main reasons behind the health of a person, and in contrast, disharmony among them leads to disease and unhealth. Let us discuss these factors in detail. Firstly, '*kaal*' in relation to 'Diet': It is very important to eat quality food, but the time, and regularity of eating should be considered of equal importance. For eg. skipping breakfast drastically reduces the

rate of metabolism, leading to a decrease in the effectiveness of digestion, metabolism and absorption. The slowdown of Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) due to not getting the food at the right time is very frequently underestimated as a cause of diseases. Intake of food after eating a proper meal after a very small interval, popularly known as snacking, or *Adhyashan* in terms of *Ayurveda*, burdens the system overmuch. Similarly, a lack of nutritious food, or that containing only one kind of nutrient will also not be sufficient to maintain good health. The list goes on endlessly.

Sleep (an activity) in relation to '*kaal*'. Both a surplus and lack of sleep results in sedentary tendencies, procrastination and increase in the levels of stress and anxiety. So, time of beginning of sleep, the duration of sleep, and its regularity decide the quality of sleep. Lack of sleep (*Heen Yog*), random sleep timings (*Mithya yog*), negligible sleep (*Ayog*), excessive sleep (*Atiyog*), all these patterns of sleep leave the person with confused state of mind. Regular, sufficiently long, and limited randomness of sleep is associated with good health.

Secondly, the term '*Arth*', meaning 'what we sense'. Lifestyle is about controlling our tendencies of watching too much T.V., getting lost in sources of entertainment for too long, obsessively seeking fashionable and trendy things etc. Here, it is stated that when it is controlled what we sense by virtue of rational thought, one can manage time and resources in an orderly, better way, creating and living a balance between desire and its satiety point. Unfulfilled desires can transform themselves into lust/greed and other forms of negative emotions which further disturb the daily routines, simultaneously leading to a disturbed state of mind. The five perceptions in the form of five functions play a great role in influencing both physical and

mental urges. These help to maintain the habits and prepare the person for the future. Under the heading '*Karma*'- come all the activities. The activities are divided into three categories – *Shaaririk* (Physical), *Vaachic* (Vocal) and *Maansik* (Mental). A balance in physical activities like balanced exercising, no bad postures etc. refer to the healthy state of physical activities. Same is the case for vocal activities (speech), the state of health here involves no unnecessary usage of verbal abuses, not speaking what we clearly know to be untruths, and trying to get as close to speaking truth as possible etc. Similarly, in case of mental activity, control over-thinking and excessive rumination and its opposite, over tendency to behave in an irresponsible manner etc.

### CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that, with only one 'verse' the author of *Ashtang Hridayam* has concisely explained that all diseases occur due to a fault in the way of living. The fault lies there, no matter how it has been caused, that is the principle. Only when we go on to fix them should we consider where, how and when the fault has occurred, whether they have been caused by proximal, medial or distal determinants and then how to eliminate it as easily as possible. With another verse, which would further elaborate the concept, the Author wants to explain that each and every disease on the Earth is due to the fault, overall, and somehow, the diseased<sup>[8]</sup>

### Recommendations

For mathematical and statistical confirmation of the concept, it is recommended that the readers go see the correlation between the way of living life, lifestyle, encompassing every component of life, whether proximal, medial or distal, and the diseases caused due to it.

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