



Preventive measures for dermatological disorders: An Ayurvedic perspective

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the oldest life and health science of the world. Ayurveda emphasizes more on preventive and health promotive aspects. While dealing with the maintenance and promotion of health, it takes into consideration, the whole body, mind and the spirit, i.e. holistic approach, which is gaining increasing acceptability worldwide. Skin is an important organ of communication with the external world and has an eternal relationship with *Manas* (psyche/mind). Therefore, more than a cosmetic nuisance, a skin disease produces anxiety, depression and other psychological problems that affect the quality of life. Ayurveda advises, *Pathyapathya* (do's & don'ts regarding diet and behavioral conducts), *Dincharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Sanshodhan* (bio-purification) and regular use of *Rasayana* (rejuvenative measures) as preventive measures to achieve the balanced status of body, mind and consciousness. *Sanshodhan* is claimed for its preventive, health promotive, prophylactic and rejuvenative effect. Regular use of rejuvenative measures is reputed to promote physical as well as mental health, improve defence mechanism and enhance longevity. Therefore, the proper and regular use of these preventive measures help in the prevention from wide range of dermatological disorders viz. psoriasis, atopic dermatitis etc, which is the main focus of the present article.

Keywords: Dincharya, Ritucharya, Sanshodhan, Rasayan, Preventive measures

INTRODUCTION

More than just a medical system, Ayurveda is a science of life. It offers the way to promote health, attain longevity and also for the management of wide range of disorders. Ayurveda helps to maintain the health in an individual by the application of inherent natural principles which aimed at restoring equilibrium. It has been in existence since the beginning of time (i.e Ayurveda is considered *Anadi*). Due to its simplicity and scientific nature, Ayurveda has drawn the attention worldwide [1].

The skin is the largest organ of the body, having a surface area of 1.8 m² and measuring approximately 18% of body weight. It reveals both the normal and pathological state of an individual. Important function of skin includes, protection from many physical, chemical & environmental insults, thermal regulation, energy storage, vitamin D formation, excretion of important metabolic products and constitutes the most extensive sense organ of the body for the perception of the tactile, thermal & painful stimuli, etc. [2]. The skin

undergoes numerous changes throughout the aging process, during a lifetime. Changes may also occur due to pathological illness, trauma and environmental exposure. Exposure to sunlight, smoking, several skin disorders, scarring and psychological factors can profoundly affect the structure and appearance of the skin. Different type of preventive measures and principles for skin health restoration were developed to address many of these changes. Skin health can be restored and maintained by directly targeting the different layers and cells of the skin involved in the process of skin aging & dysfunction and also in the pathogenesis of a disease.

Definition of health as per the Ayurveda include the physical, physiological, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of an individual [3]. Not surprisingly the concept of health propounded by WHO in the modern era is in close approximation with the concept of health defined in Ayurveda.

The present review focused on the preventive measures like daily regimen, seasonal regimen, do's & don'ts regarding the dietetics & behavioral

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conducts, Bio-purification, *Rasayana* and code of good conducts as offers by Ayurveda. Ayurveda emphasizes more on the importance of proper life style for promoting positive health. Therefore, one has to adopt these preventive measures in day to day life for prevention from wide range of dermatological disorders.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Ayurveda, emphasizes more on prevention to promote the health with regular and proper use of following diet and lifestyle regimens.

1. *Dincharya* (Daily regimen)
2. *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimen)
3. *Pathyapathya* (Do's and don'ts about dietetics and behavioral conducts)
4. *Sanshodhana* (Bio-purification)
5. *Rasayana* (rejuvenation by nutraceutical action)
6. *Sadvratta & Achara Rasayana* (code of good conducts)

Dincharya: Normal circadian rhythms are very important in day to day life. Ayurveda suggests to begin daily habits with awareness, early rising, avoid suppression of natural urges and eliminate wastes as per urge, keep the teeth cleaned, regular use of massage, regular daily bathing (bathing enhances the appetite and promote longevity), consume suitable and wholesome diet according to the appetite and metabolic needs, since it is the basis of life and important for day to day promotion of health. Ayurveda has also been suggested to avoid late night sleep, eating stale foods, having sex with inappropriate partner & at unsuitable time and position and the misuse of senses. These might lead to imbalance in the circadian rhythms and thus might help in the pathogenesis of dermatological disorders. Therefore, one has to stay aware about these daily regimen for day to day promotion of health, boost immunity and prevention from dermatological disorders [4,5].

Ritucharya: Adaptation according to the changes is the key for survival, thus the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen/regimen for seasonal variations) is very important. Ayurveda offers some do's and don'ts regarding diet and lifestyle as per the season or seasonal variations, viz. one has to avoid salty & sour diet and excess exposure to sun during summer season because they lead to the aggravation of '*Pitta Dosha*' and thus may help in the pathogenesis of dermatological disorders. Acharya Sushruta also suggested to take diet as per the aggravated *Dosha* in concerned season [6]. Peoples are not aware or ignore the suitable types of food stuffs, dressing and others regimen to be followed in particular season, this leads to

derangement of homeostasis and manifestation of various disorders such as dermatological disorders etc. Dermatological disorders are also resulted due to an inappropriate relationship of mankind with environment [7,8].

Pathyapathya: Ayurveda emphasizes on consuming healthy and nutritious diet. Diet is considered vital for human body since it provides the basic nutrients. Ayurveda has considered *Ahara* (diet), *Nidra* (sleep) and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) as the basic sub-pillars of life since these are very important for promotion of health as well as for prevention from forthcoming disorders [9]. Diet is consumed as per the metabolic need of body tissues which constantly undergo wear and tear. Ayurveda suggested to consume the *Ahara* containing six *Rasa* (namely *Madhur*, *Amla*, *Lavan*, *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya*). Modern science also suggested to consume balanced diet containing, protein, carbohydrate, fats, minerals, vitamins etc. in order to maintain & promote health. Unfortunately in modern era the concept of *Hita Ahara* is continuously being ignored, which is very essential for promotion of health.

Intake of wholesome diet is responsible for maintenance as well as promotion of health while unwholesome diet is responsible for pathogenesis & manifestation of several disorders [10]. Acharya Charaka has clearly stated that one should intake such type of *Ahara*, which not only helps to maintain the health but also serves as a prophylactic measure against forthcoming disorders [11].

Ayurveda also suggested to follow some rules related to lifestyle and intake of food like, avoid suppression of natural urges at meal, avoid any type of mental stress at meal and ever take food after proper digestion of previous meal i.e. on empty stomach, etc. to promote physical and mental health [12,13].

Sanshodhana : *Sanshodhana* is very special type of procedure in Ayurveda. *Panchakarma* is the technology for *Sanshodhana*. *Panchakrama* includes five specially designed procedures used as preventive as well as therapeutic measures. *Sanshodhana*, restore the normal homeostasis and also facilitates the absorption of nutrient. The *Sanshodhana* helps to maintain the *Dosha* and *Dhatu Samya* i.e to maintain the homeostasis & thus, leads to the repair and regeneration of different body tissues and also modulate the body immunity. Therefore, bio-purification is very important preventive measure for chronic inflammatory and autoimmune dermatological disorders. Since it also eliminate the body toxins

out of the body thus also help to prevent allergic dermatological disorders. [14]. In today's busy life, stress plays a major role in the manifestation or exacerbation of major skin disorders like psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, acne vulgaris etc. Since, *Sanshodhana* also promote the mental health, reduces the stress therefore also helps in the prevention from these psychosomatic dermatological disorders [15].

Rasayana: *Rasayanas* are playing a major role for the prevention from dermatological disorders as they keep the skin rejuvenate by maintaining its integrity, lusture, complexion and function. *Rasayana* as described in Ayurveda nourishes the body, revitalizes the sense, detoxify the body, boosts immunity and helps to keep the body and mind in best of its health. It is a multi-angled approach, taking care of body, mind and spirit thus promote total well-being of individual. It seems that *Rasayana* act at three level of bio-system to promote health, at the level of *Agni* by promoting digestion and metabolism, at the level of *Srotas* by promoting microcirculation and tissue perfusion and at the level of *Rasa* itself by acting as direct nutritient. Thus, these rejuvenative measures act essentially on nutrition dynamics and rejuvenate both the body and psyche. Therefore, *Rasayan* is very important measure for the prevention from forthcoming dermatological disorders [16].

Sadvratta & Achara Rasayan: Ayurveda offers some code of good conducts under the heading of *Sadvratta* and *Achara Rasayana*. The conducts under *Sadvratta* and *Achara Rasayana* can be categorizes into personal (viz. limited sexual relations, early sleeping and awakening, avoid excess exertion, avoid suppression of natural urges, regime of bathing, keeping skin clean), social (keep mercy on others, telling truth, avoid alcoholism, be soft hearted, always use cleaned and washed cloths), psychological and emotional (try to be in a steady mental state i.e. avoid height of emotions, try to avoid to memorize if being insulted by anyone, keep patience, etc) [17,18].

These are the principles of good codes and conducts for day to day implementation along with wholesome food habits. *Sadvratta* and *Achara Rasayan* directly or indirectly promote physical, mental and spiritual health. Since, it is well acknowledged that, the skin has an eternal relationship with *Manas* (psyche/mind), therefore, one should follow these principles of *Sadvratta* and *Achara Rasayan* in order to boost the immune system and prevention from forthcoming dermatological disorders.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is highlighted as a holistic system with its concern for prevention and promotion of physical as well as mental health and maintaining a healthy balance of *Manas* and *Sharira* (mind & body). It is well acknowledged that Ayurveda emphasizes more on the preventive aspect and importance of proper life style. Therefore, Ayurveda is highlighted as a science of life and art of living, having adequate knowledge on the internal mechanism of human health and longevity. Prime objective of Ayurveda, the 'prevention' can be achieved by adopting diet & lifestyle in response to change in climatic condition. Dermatological disorders are very common in the present era due to unawareness towards and or ignoring proper daily regimen, seasonal regimen, lifestyle and good code of conducts. *Ahara*, *Nidra* & *Brahmacharya* are considered as *Tryaupastambha* (three sub-pillars) of life. These three factors play an important role in the promotion of positive health and longevity. Therefore, these are important milestones for prevention from dermatological disorders.

Preventive cares are also in practice in today's medical field. Preventive cares are equally important as preventive measures. Preventive cares focus on evaluating your health status when you are symptom free. Preventive cares allow you to obtain early diagnosis and treatment and also help to avoid more serious health problems. Even if you're in the best shape of your life, a serious condition with no signs or symptoms may put your health at risk.

Ayurveda is the science and art of healing that deals with all aspects of an individual. The aims of Ayurveda are to promote, physical, mental & emotional health and to cure the diseases. It provides guidance regarding food and lifestyle so that a healthy individual can stay healthy and individuals with health challenges can improve their health. In Ayurveda, psychological factors have been given equal importance as physical & physiological factors in the etio-pathogenesis of various dermatological disorders.

It seems that, undergoing metabolic processes, environmental factors, genetic factors, hormonal changes, continuous exposure to the several toxins and psychological factors alone or together with physical factors throughout the life, lead to changes in the skin structure, function, tolerance and appearance, affecting the life style as well as quality of life in concerned individual. In present era, stress and related conditions are principal culprits responsible for the manifestation or

exacerbation of manifested, psychosomatic dermatological disorders affecting the quality of life.

In the present era, altered immunity and psychosocial stress play an important role in the pathogenesis of various dermatological disorders. Different dermatological disorders like psoriasis, atopic dermatitis etc. run a chronic course and there is no definite treatment claimed for them, till date. Therefore, by applying these preventive measures of Ayurveda in our day to day life, definitely help in prevention from wide range of dermatological disorders.

CONCLUSION

There is no definite treatment available for chronic inflammatory dermatological disorders like psoriasis, atopic dermatitis etc. Therefore, prevention is the best way to keep such type of disorders at the bay. Different measures related to diet and lifestyle for prevention from dermatological disorders as per the seasonal and daily need, play an important role in promotion of physical, mental and social health since the dermatological disorders are closely related to social and psychological factors.

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