



## IMPLICATION OF DIAGNOSIS IN ASIAN MEDICINE

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### ABSTRACT

The intricate association between human health and environmental influences plays a crucial role in diagnostic practices within Asian medicine. This paper examines the cyclical relationship between seasonal changes and the human body, highlighting the necessity of understanding nature's effects on physical and psychological well-being stated in ASM (Asian Medicine System). It advocates for an integrative analysis of dietary components, lifestyle choices, and genetic predispositions to personalize treatment strategies effectively. Emphasizing a holistic view, the paper aligns with Rumer Godden's "four rooms" metaphor, which encompasses the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of health. By prioritizing thorough patient history inquiries and symptom assessments, clinicians can glean valuable insights into physiological imbalances, particularly regarding digestive health. The importance of meticulous observation and prognostic evaluations further ensures that therapeutic interventions are tailored to individual constitutional needs and health disparities. Ultimately, this paper underscores the necessity of a comprehensive, personalized approach in the diagnostic process inherent to Asian medicine.

**KEYWORDS:** Asian Medicine systems, Diagnosis.

### INTRODUCTION

**"Health is not simply the absence of sickness."**

Diagnosis is an utmost essential aspect in any medical system. It can be defined as an explanation related to the concept of disease, causes of disease, factors related to the disease and prognosis of the disease. Every factor is utmost crucial among these as it gives direction for guidelines of the treatment.

All the Asian medical systems have their own specific physiological, Anatomical and psychological fundamental theories on which Diagnosis and treatment are based as preventive and Curative treatment principles. These principles are derived through practical observational inferential aspect through its application on human body which shows resemblance in Natural processes or interactions among the substances in the Universe and has correspondence through a rational interpretation of disease formation.

The relation of body, mind and nature with their overall impact on human life forms the core of these sciences. Genomic composition material similarities are biochemical inheritance with tremendous Variations in geographical habitancy adaptation process causing differentiation and specification in species.

Hence, Maximum emphasis is also given to the

interaction between the human body and the variations in the environment. An imbalance of essential body functions (humors) leads to a disturbance in the basic core genomic constitution of the individual i.e. physiologically and structurally. Physical abnormalities are predictor signs of established imbalances in the fundamental physiological elements i.e. humors.

To understand the basic fundamentals of Diagnosis in ASM it can be categorize as follows:

1. Concept of disease
2. Causes of disease
3. Classification of Disease
4. Method of Clinical Examination

Concept of disease with imbalances in essential elements i.e. Humors. Causes of disease in Asian medical systems are multi-factorial manifestation emphasising role of formation and nourishment of essential body elements with impact of diet, lifestyle, mind and Season/climate in maintaining health and in managing / curing diseases. Classification of Disease is the nomenclature of the disease that has been given minimum importance in ASM. Instead, it is the pattern of imbalances that is the most essential factor to be assessed for diagnosis. Method of Clinical Examination is based on Clinical examination that identifies the imbalance of humors in terms of its observations. Patient Examination is utmost

essential part of patient and disease manifestation understanding so, precision in Pulse examination, Tongue examination, Visual observation. Also, Inquiry is the key sources of previous data regarding the disease initiation stage and the basic health strength of patient.

## DISCUSSION

- **Concept of disease**, Concept of disease in Asian medicine fundamentally deals with imbalances in essential elements i.e. humors. Therefore "different diseases, alike treatment, alike disease, different treatments" is observed in almost all Asian medicine systems. Treatment is based on configuration of imbalance in fundamental physical and physiological factors i.e. humors that are inferred, assessed and identified. As humors are the basic entities of body functions, any imbalance in it leads to functional as well as physical abnormality (imbalance of structural elements). Hence, any abnormal condition is evaluated based on primary criterion of normal functions of fundamental factors.
- In **Chinese medicine (TCM)**, *Yin-Yan* and the five elements are the foundation of the Science. Generally, disease is perceived as a disharmony (or imbalance) in the functions of *yin*, *yang*, *Qi*, *xue*, *zang fu*, *meridians* and/or their interaction between the human body and the environment.
- A disease has two aspects - *bing* and *Zheng*. The *bing* is often translated as 'disease entity', disease category, illnesses, or simply "diagnosis". The '*zheng*', is a more important one, and usually translated as "pattern". In **TCM**, concept of disease is applied in "disease-cause pattern discrimination" (*bing*, *yin*, *bian*, *zheng*). Korean Oriental and Japanese Kampo medicine follow the fundamentals of Chinese medicine.
- **Korean Oriental medicine** has an acquaintance with the 'eight principle pattern identification' which is representative of therapeutics comprehending symptoms dealing with *Yin-Yang*, exterior / outer and interior / inner part of the body, cold / heat, deficiency / excess and external / internal.
- Similarly, in **Japanese Kampō medicine**, the pathological conditions of all eight basic factors are given importance and are scored to diagnose certain diseases. The classification into six channels (greater *yang*, brighter *yang*, lesser *yang*, greater *yin*, lesser *yin* or reverting *yin* disease) represent a basic classification of disease stage, but each stage of the disease according to the *Shang Han* also indicate diseases in specific locations, so that it can also be called a classification of disease locations.
- In **Mongolian medicine**, the basic reason of pathogenesis is the intrinsic factor causing imbalance leading to disease occurrence. It points out the disease itself is the intrinsic factor and the pathogenesis (the disease's development) is the exogenous factor. Intrinsic factor is not only the energy and material base for life functions but also the cause of underlying factor for all diseases. It examines relationships between *heyi*, *xila* and *badagan* to explain the physiological and pathological phenomenon in the human body.
- The characteristics of **Korean Oriental medicine** are structure based on four integers which through a balance between body and mind makes use of the curative methods. The formation of "small" and "large" organ systems and the resultant structural and functional deviations of each constitutional type has a specific pattern of *Seong-Jeong deviation*.
- This variation causes the disparity in the formation of organ systems with specific patterns of 'smallness' and 'largeness' in different constitutional types. The constitutionally differentiated organ system scheme with its pattern of large and small organ systems formed from the *Seong-Jeong deviation* gives rise to the constitutionally differentiated physiological qualities.
- **Unani medicine** has given much importance to 'Distempers' of the Four Humors. The organism as whole with its constituent parts responds and are affected by distempers (disorders of temperament). It also includes the four humors. The balance of the individual temperament is essential through diet, sleep and exercise.
- In **Sowa Rigpa-Tibetan medicine**, it believes that in the sick body there should be consideration of the three causes, four conditions, six different entrances, locations and fifteen pathways of the diseases.
- **Ayurved medicine** states that the imbalance of *Tri-Dosha* is a fundamental cause for development of disease. *Tridosha* are fundamental functional factors that control body functions and maintain body structure (*Dhatu*). *Srotas* (Channels of *Sapta Dhatu*) i.e. systemic involvement is necessary aspect for the manifestation of disease. It gives an indication of the structures involved and hampered in a specific imbalanced condition of the disease. Understanding *Tri-Guna* (*Satva-Raja and Tama*) and *Panchmahabuta* (Five elements) is essential for body elements in Ayurved.
- **Yoga and Siddha medicine** systems have similarity to *Tri-Dosha* principles of Ayurveda. Many concepts are alike in these systems.

## Causes of disease

All the Asian medical systems have stated the major responsibilities of diet, lifestyle, mind and Season/climate in maintaining health and in managing / curing diseases. The relationship between diseases and seasonal factors has been explored thoroughly in almost all Asian systems like **Ayurved, Sowa Rigpa-Tibetan, Chinese, and Korean medicine**.

- In Asian medicine systems, a link between diet and health has been emphasized and culturally inherited has now spread far and wide globally.
- The impact of climate on the body is a most recognized aspect of Asian medicine systems. Climate and geographical conditions form the foundation of life, thus to respect it and analyze to

make suitable changes in diet and lifestyle accordingly has been emphasized in Asian medicine systems.

- Life style mainly focuses on exercise, sleep, sexual activity and other regimen habits like defecation, frequency and quantity of food.
- Mind is ultimate cause for mismanagement of diet, sleep and all individual characteristics. Each factor i.e. diet, lifestyle, mind and season has a varied effect on the individual as per basic constituent (different) constitutional types.
- In **Chinese medicine**, the causes are mainly of three types: first cause is the effects of six climatic factors (six evils or devils), second cause is seven emotions that causes damage to the functions of the *zang-fu* especially of the liver and the third cause is related to dietary irregularities, sexual intemperance, trauma, and parasites (*chong*). Japanese Kampo and Korean oriental medicine also share the same views as Chinese medicine.
- **Korean Oriental medicine** emphasizes the internal causes based on Sasang four images theory- life-style, climate, mental state.
- **Japanese Kampo medicine** deals cause of disease in accordance with properties of food, physical activity, mind status, external factors, and previous life deeds.
- In **Unani medicine**, factors related to disease are air, food & drink, body movement & repose, psychic factors, sleep and evacuation-retention of waste products.
- In **Sowa-rigpa-Tibetan medicine**, there are four conditions that trigger disorders which are seasonal changes, evil spirit influences, diet and behavior. The association between the advancement of disease with the patient's age, seasons and place where the patient resides are considerably highlighted. There are six areas of inception of disease. The humeral diseases in relation to age, place of occurrence, maturation period and seasonal changes are also deliberated. Significant role of mind in disease development is also specified by three specific distant causes of disorder that are attachment, hatred and close-mindedness.
- In **Ayurved**, various causative factors are considered for formation of disease. Factors that varies in everyone are *Ahar* (Dietary factors), *Vihar* (Physical Factors), *Manas* (Psychological factors), *Purva Karma* (Previous life deeds). *Desha* (geographical area) and season are *Bahya* (External Factors) that are common in group of individuals and is natural cause of disease development in epidemical conditions and for prevalence of specific disease too. These two factors are to be managed with the help of adoption of a suitable diet and lifestyle by community.
- In **Siddha medicine**, causes of imbalance and occurrence of diseases are due to environment, climatic conditions, diet, physical activities and stress. Spiritual and mental factors are considered

major causes of disease. In mental causes, three *Eadanai* (physical bindings) are stated: Material bindings (*Porul Patru*), offspring bindings (*Makkal Patru*), worldly bindings (*Ulaga Patru*). Also, there has been elaboration of psychological and spiritual factors are described which are two *Vinai* (Acts), three *Malam* (3 Impurities) of the Soul, eight *Ragam* (Passions).

*Prognosis* has been explained in detail in **Ayurved and Siddha** medicine systems. These systems have stated the importance of the messenger and dreams in relation to prognosis.

Almost all Asian medicine systems, mainly **Siddha and the Mongolian systems** have stated spiritual powers in context with causes of disease and as cures for illness.

### Classification of Disease

The nomenclature of the disease has been given least importance in Asian medicine systems. It is the pattern of imbalances that is the most essential factor to be assessed for diagnosis. It is ensured as per the varied combination of causes and the imbalance of the humors for the development of the diseases.

A prototype of inequity in functional essential elements i.e. humors are evaluated for diagnosis. Digestion disorders in relation with functional disturbances act as root causes of all diseases and this has also been asserted by most of the Asian Medicine systems.

- **Chinese medicine** is based upon Patterns that refers to a 'pattern of disharmony or functional disturbance'. There are disharmony patterns of *Qi*, *xue*, body fluids, *zang-fu* and meridians. They are ultimately defined by their signs and symptoms.

The first and most important step in pattern diagnosis is an evaluation of the present signs and symptoms based on the 'eight principles. These eight principles refer to the four pairs of fundamental qualities of a disease i.e. *exterior/internal*, *heat/cold*, *vacuity/repletion* and *yin/yang*. Of these, *heat/cold* and *vacuity/repletion* have the biggest clinical importance. After the determination of fundamental nature of a disease in terms of the Eight Principles, then the emphases on the circumstantial of typical disharmony patterns of the various entities and evidence is collected on how specific entities are affected. This evaluation can be done in respect of the meridians, *Qi*, *xue*, body fluids, and *zang-fu*. There is also a three-special pattern diagnosis system used only in case of febrile and infectious diseases that are Six Channel system or division pattern, *Wei Qi Ying Xue* system or four division pattern and *San Jiao* system or three burners pattern.

Differentiation of Syndromes is as per 4 stages (Levels): 1) *Wei* (Defensive) Level (the initial stage of many infectious diseases, or Warm Wind diseases) 2) *Qi* Level (the Warm Evil has progressed into the interior) 3) *Ying*

(Nutritive) Level- (disease reached the Blood (Xue) stage at the deepest level) and 4) *Xue* (Blood) Level (the Warm Evil has entered the Blood).

- In **Korean Medicine**, a disease is often referred as the 'the pattern' to a medicine instead of the name of the disease. The Pattern refers to a diagnostic conclusion of the pathological changes at a certain stage of the disease not simply giving a respective meaning for a symptom includes the location, cause and nature of the disease as well as the inclination of development. It prescribes medicine against certain specific patterns.

The 'eight principles pattern identification' and some other pattern identification methods for categorizing disease symptoms - Visceral Pattern Identification, Six-Meridian Pattern Identification, Defense, *Qi*, and Nutrient - Blood Pattern Identification *wi-ki- yong-hyeol*.

- In the **Mongolian system**, the classification of disease is done on the basis of- Deformities in *heyi* or air, Deformities in *xila* or heat and Deformities in *badagan* or cold.
- In **Ayurved**, diseases are classified in various ways. Broadly diseases are classified into the following types: *Sahaj* (inherited) / *Garbhaja* (congenital), *Jataja* (after birth), *Aghataja* / *Peedaja* (traumatic), *Kalaja* (climatic / age related), *Prabhavaja* (influenced due to curse of divine super human powers / evil spirits) and *Svabhavaja* (natural). All these diseases are again classified in various dual types viz. a) as per severity, b) as per prognosis, c) as per involvement of dhatus, d) as per dominance of tri-doshas, e) diseases due to deeds.
- According to the **Siddha medicine**, '*Yugi muni*' diseases are widely classified into 4448. This classification is based on the following entities - clinical signs and symptoms related to derangement of the three physiological units i.e. *Vatham*, *Pitham* and *Kapham*, the particular causative factors of a disease, injury to the body's vital points (*Varma* points), psychological causes, involvement and affected parts of the body, worm infestation and other infective organisms and genetic inheritance sometimes known as '*Karma Dhosas*'. It shows a similarity with **Ayurved**.

#### Method of Clinical Examination

Clinical examination identifies the imbalance of humors in terms of its observations. Pulse examination, Tongue examination, Visual observation and inquiry form the main sources of information regarding the disease and the patient.

All the Asian Medicine Systems have accepted these methods as a resource for examination. Visual inspection (includes Urine and Tongue), Palpation (includes pulse diagnoses) and Inquiry forms the core component of disease assessment.

Besides these 3 modes of assessment in **Ayurved**, 10

factors to assess strength of the patient and 8 factors of examination for patient's body elements are elaborated.

- **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** have four types of examinations: Inspection, Inquiry, Palpation, and Audio-olfactory assessment.
- In **Japanese Kampō medicine**, pulse and abdominal diagnoses constitute the main part of the palpation examination. Abdominal diagnosis is used only in Japanese Kampō.
- **Korean medicine** also applies a similar method of examination - Visual inspection, Listening and smelling, Inquiry and Pulse diagnosis.
- **Unani medicine** has emphasized diagnosing a disease through pulse (*Nubz*). Other methods of diagnosis include examination of urine (*Baul*), and stool (*Baraz*).
- In **Mongolian medicine**, there is an investigation of three sources affecting the corporeal body- *heyi*, *xila*, *badagan*. It examines the seven primary components - food, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and sperm. The method of examination includes pulse examination which is the main traditional diagnostic tool, because the physician checks the type of the disease (hot or cold) and the conditions of the internal organs in this way. Other methods are examination of the tongue, Urine examination, and interrogating the patient.
- In **Siddha medicine**, diagnosis is based on the examination of eight parameters (just as **Ayurved**) commonly known as "Ennavakaitthervu". These are: *Na* (tongue), *Varnam*, *Kural* (voice), *Kan* (eyes), *Thodal* (touch), *Malam* (stool), *Neer* (urine), *Naadi* (pulse).
- In **Sowa rigpa-Tibetan medicine** diagnosis is divided into three sections - Visual observation/ urine analysis, Touch/ pulse palpation and Questioning/ interrogation.

Thus, in diagnosis there are varied factors in common in all the Asian medicines but explained in different ways.

#### CONCLUSION

It is convincing in all Asian medicines that the causes of diseases are identified based on factual considerations in which impact of seasons on the Human body is deeply elaborated and applied. The relation between Nature and the Human body has been superlatively understood and applied for treatment of the disease in Asian medicine.

Other important facts are regularities and properties of dietary items, daily regimen, physical activities and its relationship with individual's body composition as well as psychological strength which are to be analyzed according to genomic status of individual.

"Everyone is a house with four rooms - a physical, a mental, an emotional and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time but unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we



are not a complete person.” - Rumer Godden, *A House with Four Rooms*

In **classification of diseases**, Asian medicines to a greatly emphasis on the pattern of imbalances of physiological basic units i.e. Humors. Also, the impact of the digestive system has been given immense attention in disease formation and maintenance of healthy condition.

Also, interrogation or inquiry is considered an important step before the diagnosis which helps in inference-based knowledge adding valuable facts during disease and patient examination.

External observable parts of the body like the tongue, the skin, the eyes, the nails, the hair and the abdomen reflect internal status of body hence are essentially assessed during examination which plays a vital role in investigation of the disease. Urine is a key source for the evaluation of the body fluids. Stool analysis and sweat are also important in investigation of disease.

**Asian medicine systems** highlight the need for keen observation of signs and symptoms of the disease related to the sites of senses like skin, eyes, tongue, beside excretions from body, other body parts like nails and the psychic status of patient during the vital stages of examination. It also emphasizes on prognosis of disease before initializing the treatment.

Thus, the Patient examination is the most essential part of diagnosis that should be based on the basic individual constituent and must be correlated with the signs and symptoms of essential functional units (humors) for diagnosis as per the pattern of imbalance (disease condition).

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