



AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF CANCER

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ABSTRACT

Cancer which is marked by the uncontrolled multiplication of cells, has largely remained incurable due to its ability to spread rapidly and having a lot of complexities. The spread of disease is very rapid so remedial measures are to be taken at the earliest. In modern science treatment is aimed at killing the affected cells but it runs with the risk of affecting the neighbouring normal cells. Ayurvedic management helps to improve the quality of life of cancer patients and work as a supportive therapy even in critical patients. The rejuvenation and panchkarma therapies add life to such patients.

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is one of the most dreaded diseases. Ayurveda, a traditional Indian medicine of plant drugs have been successful from very early times in using these natural drugs and preventing or suppressing various tumors using various lines of treatment. The broad aim of this article is to provide a general outline on descriptions of cancers and their management from an ayurvedic practitioners perspective underlying its scientific principles involved in treating these conditions with the use of natural products. This article reviews the available literature regarding researches on anti-cancerous ayurvedic herbs and also includes a summary of treatment strategies of various cancers. It is written with an intention to raise awareness and encourage implementation of ayurvedic therapies to raise awareness and encourage implementation of ayurvedic therapies for combating cancer and suggesting an integrated approach in tumor management and treatment.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The word "cancer" may be new to the 5,000 year old Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda which relies on natural substances for healing. But ancient ayurvedic classics are aware of the clinical features, resembling cancer, with the names such as apachi, gulma, granthi, arbuda. The identification, gulma, granthi, arbuda. The identification and description of malignant diseases are available in the literature of ancient India and Ayurveda. The earliest and far most record cited in Atharva Veda (2200 B.C). During this period the disease was probably described under the heading of apachi or apache, which refers to the present knowledge of various

types of lymph node swellings. In later period, Sushruta (800 B.C) in his classic "Sushruta Samhita" described this as multiple lymph node swellings that may arise at different places such as the neck, axilla and groin. In classical texts of Ayurved "arbuda"-a type of swelling; has been described extensively under the chapter apachi. According to Sushruta, swellings, which are globular, fixed, large and deep seated, slow growing, little painful, non-suppurative and appear like a fleshy mass, called arbuda. It may arise in any part of the body due to derangement of muscle vitiated by tridosha. The word arbuda has been derived from the root "Arb" with suffix "Ena", along with augmentation of "Nd" which means 'to destroy'. Grammatically, it denotes the fleshy outgrowths. The literary meaning of arbuda is a lump or mass or a polyp.

CANCER IN AYURVEDA

Ayurvedic literature describes cancer as inflammatory or non-inflammatory swelling and mentions them as either granthi or arbuda. Ayurvedic literature defines three body control systems, viz., the nervous system (vata or air), the venous system (pitta or fire), and the arterial system (kapha or water) which mutually coordinate to perform the normal function of the body. In a benign neoplasm (vatat, pitaj or kaphaj) one or two of the three bodily systems are out of control and is not too harmful because the body is still trying to coordinate among these systems. Malignant tumors (sannipataja) are very harmful because all the three bodily systems lose mutual body coordination and thus cannot prevent tissue damage, resulting in a deadly morbid condition.

AYURVEDA COULD DO MIRACLES

Ayurvedic principles could prove a boon for dying cancer patients. Ayurveda could be helpful in the management of cancer in many ways such as prophylactic, palliative, curative and supportive. Ayurvedic medicines helps to improve the quality of life the patients as listed below^[5]

- 1) Ayurvedic preparations can act as an adjuvant or a co-therapy along with chemotherapy or radiotherapy. It is also helpful in post surgery care.
- 2) Ayurvedic medicine help to minimize the side effects of these therapies.
- 3) Ayurveda help in reducing the therapeutic dose of various drugs as proved in some studies using cow urine.
- 4) They can be helpful in targeting the specific tissues as shown in some allopathic studies on nano particles of gold.
- 5) Ayurvedic preparations help to slow the progress of cancer in cases where chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery is contraindicated, due to some reasons and patients have no other choice.
- 6) Some ayurvedic preparations could fight against tumors.
- 7) The cell protective activity of drugs prescribed in rasayana therapy helps to improve the quality of life of cancer patients.

According to modern concept treatment of cancer is aimed at killing the effected cells for which radiotherapy, chemotherapy etc are suggested. It is observed that when surgeries take place or biopsies are taken, the multiplication of cancer cell increases a lot. That is why people are scared about them. If any single cancer cells remain untouched, it has the capacity to multiply at a faster rate. That is why the possibility of metastasis and recurrence increases. Similarly toxic medicines used in chemotherapy stops all the cell division either cancerous or normal. Patient is a symptomatic for some days with some relief but it has many side effects, it recurs and metastasis occur in many parts of the body.^[6]

SIDE EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY AND RADIOTHERAPY

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| -nausea | -severe weakness |
| -vommiting | -low immunity |
| -mouth ulcer with pain | -anaemia |
| -loss of appetite | -renal toxicity |
| -gastric ulcer | -cardiac problem |
| -loss of body hair | -hepatic insufficiency |
| -skin reactions | |

AYURVEDIC APPROACH IN CANCER TREATMENT

Treatment of cancer is based on rejuvenate the cell theory, which works at DNA level. For this first of all we need to learn how cancer occurs. According to evolution theory, when ecological factor of any animal is changed to the extent that animal cannot survive anymore, then they develop a tendency to change his form. Similar

situation takes place in the part of the body which is ill for a long time. That part does not follow the instructions of the brain. This is called "cancer".

According to yuktivyapashraya, Panchkarma is suggested. Panchkarma has five steps-vaman, virechan, vasti, nasya, raktamokshan. After this five major purification steps recurrence of disease is totally finished. Vata, pitta, kapha are balanced by panchkarma therapy. In other words panchkarma is a total detoxification and purification of each and every cell of the body.^[7]

According to Ayurveda treatment of cancer is possible through ras rasayan. Ras rasayan means mercury and other metals like gold, silver, copper, zinc, iron etc. Gems like ruby, pearl, diamond etc also used in the form of ashes in the preparation of medicines. Purification of mercury is very important as it is very lethal in the natural form. There is lot of doubts related to ashes in modern science. Now we are aware of nano technology. Method of ashes is based on this. Cancer of any stage means uncontrolled multiplication of cells and metastasis can be controlled within 1-3 months.

CONCEPT OF CANCER IN AYURVEDA

The dissolution process of the tumor depends on the size of the tumor and also the necrosis within the tumor; if it is badly necrotic then surgical intervention may be necessary. Ras-rasayan medicines and panchkarma can totally dissolve the cancerous tumor. In case of liquefaction of well defined tumor it gets converted into irregular mass. This can be viewed by CT scan/MRI/Ultrasound. Sometimes there may be increase in the size of the tumor due to irregular shape of the liquefied tumor. No surgical process is used in dissolving and extracting the tumor; it is slowly absorbed by the veins and lymphatic and expelled out of body. The entire process takes 3-4 months to complete itself. If it is present in the bone then it takes a little longer time. There will be no need of chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

The treatment of the tumor through ayurvedic method of surgery is decided on the following basis:

:If the tumor is present on the outer surface of body it is treated by following ayurvedic method

:If tumor is present inside the body, Ayurveda is advised for 1-2 months and then go for modern surgery for the repair.

In devovyapashrya treatment of Ayurveda help of astrologers is also taken as our body and mind are totally attached and influenced by nature. The status of doshas of human body varies with the season. Changes in the season are due to the planets like sun, moon etc.

Satavajay is psychotherapy as human is not a body but mind and soul also. They have their own nature and disorders also. If any disease occurs in the body it effects the mind also and vice versa. Energy of body travels

through kundalini(power house) which are related to endocrine glands of human body. Hormones secreted by these glands are responsible for maintaining vital functions of the body.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic practitioners have a good understanding of etiology, symptoms, clinical manifestations, classification, malignant and benign nature of tumors, metastasis, recurrence, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. It is remarkable that the basic knowledge is fairly consistent with the current knowledge in these areas. Various treatment methods both local and systemic and various herbal formulations found useful in many tumors are presented. The malignant tumors must be completely excised because even a trace of the affected cells if left has the potential to grow many folds. Ayurvedic approach is totally different and remarkably efficient that could help a lot and helps the patient to lead healthy life.

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