



CRITICAL APPRAISAL ON LANGHANA - AN AYURVEDIC & MODERN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Each medical system has its own principles of diagnosing a disease and hence the management approach. Ayurveda sights health as an equilibrium state of doshas and dhatus (body element), the derangement of which either in the form of undernourishment or over nourishment affects the homeostasis and result in diseases. Management of such a derangement is based on substituting the depleted component and removal of those accumulated in excess. Ayurveda the ancient science of life describes various types of treatments in context of healthy individual and also diseased one. In the management of Ama, Upavasa is the ideal line of treatment. Bhavaprakasha in the context of Jwara, considers Langhana as Upavasa.^[1] As both Jwara and Amavata are Amashayotha diseases, Upavasa.^[2] can be considered as the ideal method of Langhan. This is also because of unsuitability of the other methods of Langhana, Chatusprakara samshudhi, cannot be employed in many diseased conditions because Samshodhana is contraindicated in the Samavastha of a many diseases.^[3] Pipasa cannot be employed because in morbid patients Jala is Pranadharaka.^[4] Maruta and Atapa Sevana are less efficient for Jatharagni impairment when compared to Upavasa. Deepana, Pachana cannot be employed as Agni affected by Ama is incapable of Dosha, Ahara and Oushadha Pachana.^[5] Vyayama is incompatible in alpa bala patients.^[6] For these reasons, Upavasa is the ideal method of achieving Langhana, which can be achieved by Anashana or Alpabhojana. The Langhana thus achieved will have Amapachaka effects at the Koshta level as well as Sarvadaihika level.^[7]

KEYWORDS: Langhana, Apatarpana, Sadavidhi chikitsa.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda designate mainly four types of pathologies i.e atipravritti (extreme elimination), sanga (obstacle), sira granthi (tumour) and vimarga gamana (inadequately directed circulation). A disease could be of any of these four pathology types, but its affliction could manifest in different forms depending upon exclusive body structure of the patient and arrangement of dosha, dhatu and mala etc. To tackle such affrications, Acharya Charak, describe six types of therapeutic measure: langhana (reduction), brimhana (nourishing), rukshana(drying), stambhana (styptic), snehana (oleation), and swedana (sudation)^[8] The whole treatment protocols of Āyurveda are included under two main principles of treatment as described by ācārya vāgbhaṭa. Santarpana and apatarpana are the two main protocols of management which are also known as laṅghana and bṛuṅhaṇa respectively.^[9] Ahara is specified to be a Karana of the Sharira as well as Roga; hence, the treatment could also be with Ahara. Management of diseases in Ayurveda frights with the Nidana Parivarjana. In the Ayurvedic text, Langhana is stated to be the best treatment for Santarpanotha Vyadhi.

Here, Langhana has been defined under a wide aspect, and ten treatment modalities have been gathered under this umbrella. The description of the Langhana is given as that which causes lightness of the body. Here the Upavasa and Pachana types of Langhanas were related by the scholar to understand the efficacy of both in the Agnisada. Upavasa may be full or partial; it also means Ek kala Bhojana or Hina Matra bhojana.

Concept of Langhana

Treatment part in Ayurveda is outlined as Langhana and Brumhana. Langhana is also called as Apatarpana. It is generally preferred in diseases which arise due to unscrupulous and overeating habits and sedentary lifestyles. It is sub-classified into Shamana and Shodhana.^[10] Shamana is of seven subtypes – Pachanam (medications which accomplish metabolic activities), Deepanam (medications which augment and strengthen the metabolic activities), Kshut (fasting), Trut (dehydration therapy), Vyayama (work outs), Atapa (light therapy) and Vata sevana (wind therapy). Shamana brings about equilibrium of the body mostly by

chemically transforming potentially harmful metabolites through above described methods.

Significance of Langhana

In Dharmashastra the langhana has been told as Vrata which are often practiced by Religious minded people on certain specific religious days of month. Out of many the Kshama (forbearance), Satya (truth), Daya (compassion), Dana (charity), Pavitrata (cleanliness), Indriya nigraha, Pooja, Tapasya are to be practised by every individual. In common the vrata are found to be two types. The biological responses of these upavasa has been well mentioned in dharmashastra ie punyapradou hi aamadoshaharo anakarah sadaa; spoortidascha upavaso indriyannam prasadaaka. I.e. (punya) auspiciousness, assimilate ama dosha, improves digestive fire, induces smartness, brings clarity of senses. Etc.

Autophagy

The word autophagy is derived from greek word “auto” meaning self and “phagy” meaning eating. Autophagy is normal physiological process in the body that deals with cell destruction in the body, it maintains homeostasis or normal functioning by protein degradation and turnover of the destroyed cell organelle for new cell formations. During cellular stress the process of autophagy is upscaled and increased, cellular stress is caused when there is deprivation of nutrients or growth factors. Hence autophagy may come up with an alternative source of intracellular building blocks and substrates that may originate energy to enable continuous cell survival. Autophagy reduces damaged organelles, cell membranes and proteins. Failure autophagy is the main reason for accumulation of cell damage and aging.^[10]

Assortment of system of Langhana

Langhana Chikitsa reinstates homeostasis by either regulating metabolic mechanisms (Shamana) or eliminating mechanisms (Shodhana). The gravity of vitiated Dosha and the type of Rogamarga involved, decides the relevance of type of Langhana. Factors like involved Dhatu, Desha (affected body part as well as patient's locality), Bala (physical and mental strength and immunity), Kala (season), Anala (digestive fire), Prakruti (body constitution of the patient) and Vaya (age of the patient) also need to be taken into account while selecting appropriate type of Langhana for the patient.^[14] Kshudha & Trut (starving), Vyayama (exercise), Atapa (sun bath) and Vatasevana are relatively mild forms of Langhana Chikitsa and are opted in Alpa Doshavastha as well as Durbala Rugna. Fasting (Kshut) has been vividly studied in modern medicine with encouraging results. Body enters the metabolic state called ketosis after twelve hours of fasting. In this state, body starts to break down and burn fat. Eighteen hours of fasting switches body to fat-burning mode and generates significant ketones. Within 24 hours, body cells increasingly recycle old components and break down misfiled proteins linked to Alzheimer's and other diseases. This is the one of the processes of autophagy. By 48 hours without calories or

with very few calories, carbs or protein, growth hormone level is up to five times as high as when a person begins fast. By 54 hours, insulin is dropped to its lowest level point since beginning of fasting and body becomes increasingly insulin-sensitive. By 72 hours, body breaks down old immune cells and generates new ones.

Types of Langhana

According to charakacharya langhana types are “Chatusprakara Samshuddhi pipasa maruta atapou / pachanany upavashascha vyayamaschetai langhanam” means the four types elimination therapies (viz vama, virechana, Basti, and Nasya) pipasa, Maruta, Atapa, Pachana, Upavasa and Vyayama. Chakrapani while commenting on the above line mentions that, all the shodhana therapies except the anuvasana type of basti (which helps in nourishment) constitute langhana therapy. Anuvasana nourishes the shareera, but it does not eliminate dosha hence it has not been considered as shodhana. In Ashtanga Hridaya and sangraha basically langhana has been classified into two types - Shodhana and Shamana. The procedures which eliminates vitiated dosha from the body is shodhana. This includes Nirooha, Vamana, Kayavirechana, Shirovirechana and Asraviseruti.

Shamana therapy does not eliminate vitiated dosha from the body, instead it brings the vitiated doshas to normalcy. It is of seven types pachana, deepana, kshuda, Trashna, Vyayama, Atapa, Maruta sevana. The whole langhana karma can be implemented as Shodhanaroppi and shamanaroppi langhana.

Signs and symptoms of normal and excessive langhana (C. Su. 22/34-37)

Proper excretion of flatus, urine and feces, lightness of the body, feeling of purity in heart, erucation, throat and mouth, disappearance of drowsiness and excretion, appearance of sweat and yaste for food, excessive hunger and thirst and contentment- these are the sign and symptoms of proper administration of langhana therapy. Cracking of the skin, malaise, cough, dryness of mouth, loss of appetite, anorexia, thirst, weakness of the ears and eyes, loss of memory, frequent upward movement of vayu, bradycardia, emaciation of body, loss of the power of digestion and strength – these are the signs and symptoms of excessive administration of langhana therapy.

DISCUSSION

Langhana has been extensively followed as a fragment of treatment in Ayurvedic practice. It is reflected so important that it is blended as part of Indian lifestyle since ages. Fasting is known to every household to revive bodily systems and is religiously practiced on many instances. Depending on the presentation of pathological conditions, more and more vital options of Langhana are used by Vaidya in patients as a part of treatment. The term autophagy was well admitted in the middle and later part of the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th century it was assimilated into the

core of the scientific knowledge of the time. The term was used to describe survival in periods of starvation on one's own resources. Christian de Duve coined the term autophagy in its present usage in 1963 based on his discovery of the functions of lysosome. Identification of autophagy-related genes in yeast in the 1990s led to study mechanisms of autophagy, which eventually fetched 2016 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine to Japanese researcher Yoshinori Ohsumi. The incidental findings of autophagic activities have opened new doors to study the optimal responses generated in body for survival.

CONCLUSION

One of the utmost significant treatment attitude in Ayurveda is langhana since it can be used in all types of patients by various means viz, under the title shodhana and shaman. Whenever aamadosha escalations in the body it disturbs the level of doshas, blocks the body channels, and leads to heaviness. In such condition langhana is best modality of treatment whereby it assistances in removing blockages of channels and brings lightness in body. Langhana is such type of karma, which reactivates the agni in the āma and agnisamyoga in āma condition. In nidānaparivarjana: langhana as upavāsa excludes all type of nidāna sevana which is the first step of chikitsā. It breaks the formation of sammūrchanā and directly rallies agni and removes āma. In prakṛti vighāta: by its laghu, uṣṇa, rūkṣa guṇas it confiscates vitiated doṣas from srotasa. Among six types of upakramas, due to āgneya guṇa prādhānya, langhana, rūkṣaṇa and svedana are included under langhana. Langhana helps in liberating body channels. Ayurveda delivers more alternatives through Langhana to achieve health benefits alleged by autophagy means. Langhana techniques need to be thoroughly sightseen on cellular levels through joint approach of Ayurveda and modern medicine with its huge technological tackle in order to study whether Langhana can be used to create autophagic responses and to maximize its benefits.

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