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PREVENTIVE AND THERAPEUTIC RELEVANCE OF ASHTAVIDHA AHARA VISHESHAYATANA IN CONTEMPORARY LIFESTYLE DISORDERS: AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Background: Contemporary lifestyle disorders such as obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, and metabolic syndrome have emerged as major global public health challenges due to unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle, and psychosocial stress. Modern nutritional approaches often adopt generalized dietary recommendations that may fail to address individual variability in digestion, metabolism, environment, and dietary adaptability. *Ayurveda* emphasizes individualized dietary planning through the concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana*, which describes eight essential determinants influencing the wholesome utilization of food and maintenance of health. **Aim and Objective:** The present review aims to critically analyze the preventive and therapeutic relevance of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* in contemporary lifestyle disorders and to explore its applicability in personalized nutrition, preventive healthcare, and integrative medicine. **Review Methods:** Classical *Ayurvedic literature* including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* was reviewed systematically along with contemporary scientific literature related to personalized nutrition, circadian biology, mindful eating, gut microbiome, therapeutic dietetics, and lifestyle medicine. Conceptual analysis and integrative correlations were performed to evaluate the scientific relevance of the eight dietary determinants described in *Ayurveda*. **Key Findings:** The principles of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* provide a comprehensive framework for individualized nutrition based on factors such as constitution (*Prakriti*), quantity (*Rashi*), season (*Kala*), habitat (*Desha*), food combinations (*Samyoga*), digestive capacity, and dietary habits. These principles exhibit strong correlation with modern concepts of precision nutrition, chrono nutrition, gut health, and functional dietetics. Improper dietary

practices leading to *Agnimandya* and *Ama* formation may contribute significantly to the pathogenesis of lifestyle disorders. The concept demonstrates substantial preventive and therapeutic potential in integrative healthcare. **Conclusion:** *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* represents an advanced *Ayurvedic model* of personalized nutrition with significant relevance in the prevention and management of contemporary lifestyle disorders. Its holistic and individualized approach may contribute meaningfully to modern preventive healthcare, therapeutic dietetics, and integrative medical practice.

Keywords: *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana*; *Ayurveda*; lifestyle disorders; personalized nutrition; preventive healthcare; integrative medicine

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Global Burden of Lifestyle Disorders

Lifestyle disorders have emerged as one of the most significant public health concerns worldwide, contributing substantially to morbidity, mortality, and economic burden. Rapid urbanization, sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy dietary habits, psychological stress, sleep disturbances, and excessive consumption of processed foods have accelerated the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) across both developed and developing nations.[1] Among these, obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and metabolic syndrome are increasingly affecting individuals at younger ages and have become major contributors to reduced quality of life and premature mortality.[2]

Obesity is recognized as a complex multifactorial disorder associated with excessive accumulation of adipose tissue and metabolic dysregulation. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), global obesity rates have nearly tripled over recent decades.[3] Similarly, diabetes mellitus, particularly type 2 diabetes, has shown an alarming increase due to insulin resistance, unhealthy food patterns, and reduced physical activity.[4] Hypertension and cardiovascular disorders are closely associated with dietary excess, stress, obesity, dyslipidaemia, and chronic inflammation.[5] Metabolic syndrome, characterized by abdominal obesity, hyperglycaemia, hypertension, and lipid abnormalities, reflects disturbed metabolic homeostasis and has become a major predictor of cardiovascular risk.[6]

Modern biomedical research increasingly recognizes that improper dietary habits and metabolic disturbances are central to the etiopathogenesis of these disorders. Consequently, preventive nutrition and individualized dietary interventions are gaining growing importance in global healthcare systems.

1.2 Importance of Diet in Health and Disease

Diet plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of physiological balance, disease prevention, and therapeutic management. Modern nutrition science emphasizes balanced nutrition, caloric regulation, micronutrient adequacy, gut microbiome modulation, and functional foods in maintaining optimal health.[7] Recent advances in nutritional sciences have shifted focus from

generalized dietary recommendations toward personalized and precision-based nutrition models.

Functional nutrition and lifestyle medicine further recognize that food acts not merely as a source of energy but also as a regulator of metabolic, inflammatory, endocrine, and immunological pathways.[8] Scientific evidence suggests that dietary composition, meal timing, eating behaviour, food combinations, and environmental influences significantly affect metabolic health and disease susceptibility.[9]

Lifestyle medicine particularly advocates evidence-based modifications in diet, physical activity, sleep, and stress management for the prevention and management of chronic diseases.[10] These evolving nutritional paradigms demonstrate remarkable conceptual similarities with classical *Ayurvedic dietary principles*, which have long emphasized individualized dietary planning and holistic health preservation.

1.3 Ayurvedic Concept of Ahara

In *Ayurveda*, *Ahara* (diet) is considered one of the three fundamental pillars of life (*Trayopastambha*), along with *Nidra* (sleep) and *Brahmacharya* (regulated conduct).[11] Classical *Ayurvedic texts* describe food as the primary factor responsible for nourishment, strength, complexion, vitality, immunity, and longevity.[12] Properly consumed diet sustains the equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, and *Agni*, thereby maintaining physical and mental well-being.

Ayurveda emphasizes that wholesome diet supports balanced digestive fire (*Agni*), proper tissue nourishment, and metabolic harmony, whereas improper dietary practices lead to *Agnimandya* (impaired digestion) and formation of *Ama* (metabolic toxins), which are considered the root cause of numerous diseases.[13] Therefore, dietary regulation occupies a central place in both preventive and therapeutic aspects of *Ayurvedic* healthcare.

Unlike generalized dietary systems, *Ayurveda* advocates individualized dietary planning based on constitution (*Prakriti*), digestive capacity, season, habitat, age, and disease condition. This personalized approach forms the basis of *Ayurvedic nutrition* and preventive medicine.

1.4 Introduction to Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana

The concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* is described in *Charaka Samhita* as a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors influencing the utility and effects of food.[14] The term refers to eight important determinants of diet, namely *Prakriti* (nature of food), *Karana* (processing), *Samyoga* (combination), *Rashi* (quantity), *Desha* (habitat), *Kala* (time/season), *Upayoga Samstha* (dietary rules), and *Upayokta* (individual consuming food).

These eight factors collectively determine the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of diet and provide a sophisticated model of individualized nutrition. The concept reflects advanced *Ayurvedic* understanding of digestive physiology, metabolic adaptability, environmental influences, and personalized dietary behaviour. Modern scientific concepts such

as precision nutrition, nutrigenomics, mindful eating, chrono nutrition, and gut microbiome modulation demonstrate significant parallels with these classical *Ayurvedic principles*.

The systematic application of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* may therefore offer substantial preventive and therapeutic potential in the management of contemporary lifestyle disorders.

1.5 Need for Integrative Nutritional Approaches

Despite considerable advancements in nutritional sciences, lifestyle disorders continue to rise globally, indicating limitations in uniform dietary recommendations and symptom-oriented healthcare approaches.[15] Modern healthcare increasingly recognizes the need for holistic, personalized, preventive, and sustainable nutritional strategies capable of addressing individual variability in metabolism, digestion, lifestyle, psychosocial factors, and environmental influences.

Ayurveda offers a comprehensive and individualized dietary framework that integrates physical, mental, environmental, and behavioral dimensions of health. The principles of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* provide a scientifically relevant foundation for personalized nutrition, preventive healthcare, therapeutic dietetics, and integrative medicine.

Therefore, revisiting these classical *Ayurvedic dietary principles* may contribute significantly toward the development of holistic healthcare models for the prevention and management of lifestyle disorders in the modern era. The present article aims to critically explore the preventive and therapeutic relevance of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* and to analyze its applicability within contemporary nutritional science and modern preventive healthcare systems.

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF ASHTAVIDHA AHARA VISHESHAYATANA

The concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* is described in *Charaka Samhita* as a comprehensive framework explaining the factors responsible for the wholesome and unwholesome effects of food.[16] *Ayurveda* emphasizes that the impact of diet does not depend solely upon the type of food consumed, but also upon multiple determinants related to processing, quantity, environment, season, digestive capacity, and dietary behavior. These eight factors collectively guide individualized dietary planning and form the foundation of *Ayurvedic* nutritional science.

2.1 Prakriti

Prakriti refers to the inherent nature or qualities of food substances.[17] According to *Ayurveda*, every dietary article possesses specific properties such as *Guru-Laghu* (heavy-light), *Snigdha-Ruksha* (unctuous-dry), and *Sheeta-Ushna* (cold-hot), which influence the body differently based on an individual's constitution and digestive capacity.

Clinically, understanding the *Prakriti* of food helps in selecting appropriate dietary substances for maintaining *Dosha* equilibrium and preventing metabolic disturbances. For

example, excessively heavy (*Guru*) and oily (*Snigdha*) foods may aggravate *Kapha* and contribute to obesity and dyslipidemia, whereas excessively dry (*Ruksha*) foods may aggravate *Vata* and impair digestion.

Modern nutrition correlates this concept with nutrient composition, caloric density, glycemic index, thermogenic effect, and metabolic response to food. Personalized dietary recommendations based on body constitution and metabolic profile closely resemble the *Ayurvedic principle* of *Prakriti*-based nutrition.

2.2 *Karana*

Karana refers to the processing or transformation applied to food substances before consumption.[16] *Ayurveda* recognizes that food processing significantly modifies the properties, digestibility, potency, and therapeutic utility of dietary substances.

Examples include roasting, boiling, fermentation, churning, and steaming, each altering the biological effects of food. Proper processing enhances digestibility and nutrient bioavailability, while improper processing may generate toxic effects and impair *Agni*.

Modern nutrition science similarly acknowledges the influence of food processing on nutrient retention, glycemic response, gut microbiota, and metabolic health. Fermented foods improving gut microbiome diversity and cooking methods influencing nutrient absorption are contemporary parallels of *Karana*.

From a preventive perspective, proper food processing reduces the risk of digestive disorders, metabolic dysfunction, and chronic inflammation.

2.3 *Samyoga*

Samyoga denotes the combination of two or more food substances.[16] *Ayurveda* explains that food combinations may produce synergistic beneficial effects or harmful outcomes depending upon compatibility.

Compatible combinations support nourishment and balanced metabolism, whereas incompatible combinations (*Viruddha Ahara*) may lead to *Ama* formation, *Dosha* aggravation, and disease manifestation. Classical examples include the incompatibility of milk with sour fruits or fish.

Modern nutritional science correlates this concept with food interactions, nutrient synergy, digestion kinetics, microbiome interactions, and biochemical incompatibilities. Contemporary research on unhealthy dietary combinations, processed foods, and inflammatory diets reflects the *Ayurvedic* understanding of incompatible food combinations.

Proper dietary combinations play a major role in digestive health, nutrient utilization, and prevention of metabolic disorders.

2.4 *Rashi*

Rashi refers to the quantity of food consumed and is divided into *Sarvagraha* (total quantity) and *Parigraha* (individual quantity of components).[17] *Ayurveda* strongly emphasizes moderation and digestive capacity-based food intake.

Excessive food intake may impair *Agni*, produce *Ama*, and contribute to obesity, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome, whereas inadequate nutrition may result in tissue depletion and weakness.

Modern nutritional concepts such as portion control, caloric regulation, energy balance, and obesity prevention closely resemble the *Ayurvedic principle of Rashi*. Scientific evidence supports that overeating and excessive caloric intake significantly contribute to insulin resistance, systemic inflammation, and cardiovascular diseases.

Therefore, quantity regulation is considered a cornerstone of preventive nutrition in both *Ayurveda* and modern medicine.

2.5 *Desha*

Desha refers to geographical habitat, environmental conditions, and regional adaptability.[16] *Ayurveda* recognizes that dietary requirements vary according to climate, altitude, humidity, and local ecological conditions.

Individuals residing in cold regions may require unctuous and energy-rich diets, whereas those living in hot climates benefit from cooling and hydrating foods. Consumption of locally adapted seasonal foods enhances digestion, immunity, and metabolic compatibility.

Modern concepts of environmental nutrition, regional dietary adaptation, sustainable nutrition, and local food systems strongly correlate with the *Ayurvedic principle of Desha*. Scientific studies also suggest that local and seasonal dietary patterns positively influence gut microbiota and metabolic health.

This principle highlights the preventive importance of eco-compatible dietary practices.

2.6 *Kala*

Kala refers to time in relation to both seasonal variations and individual physiological conditions.[16] *Ayurveda* describes two dimensions of *Kala*: seasonal timing (*Ritukala*) and disease or age-related timing.

Dietary modifications according to season help maintain *Dosha* balance and physiological adaptability. For example, light and cooling foods are recommended during summer, whereas nourishing and unctuous diets are preferred during winter.

Modern chrono nutrition and circadian biology similarly emphasize meal timing, seasonal eating, and biological rhythms in metabolic regulation. Disruption of meal timing is associated with obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disorders.

Thus, *Kala* demonstrates remarkable relevance in preventive healthcare and circadian metabolic regulation.

2.7 Upayoga Samstha

Upayoga Samstha refers to the rules and method of food consumption.[17] *Ayurveda* prescribes mindful eating practices such as eating warm food, consuming meals in a calm environment, avoiding excessive speed or delay while eating, and maintaining mental concentration during meals.

Improper eating behaviour may impair digestion, disturb *Agni*, and promote metabolic disorders. Modern research on mindful eating, behavioural nutrition, and psychological aspects of eating strongly supports these *Ayurvedic principles*.

Mindful eating practices improve satiety regulation, digestion, glycaemic control, and psychological well-being, thereby reducing the risk of obesity and lifestyle disorders.

2.8 Upayokta

Upayokta refers to the individual consuming food.[16] *Ayurveda* recognizes individual variability in constitution, digestive capacity, age, physical activity, mental status, and disease condition.

The same diet may produce different effects in different individuals depending upon metabolic and constitutional differences. This forms the basis of personalized *Ayurvedic nutrition*.

Modern concepts of precision nutrition, nutrigenomics, metabolic individuality, and personalized healthcare closely parallel this principle. Individualized dietary planning based on genetic, metabolic, and behavioural factors is increasingly recognized as essential for disease prevention and therapeutic success.

The concept of *Upayokta* highlights the advanced personalized approach of *Ayurveda* in nutritional science.

Table 1. Eight factors of Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana and their modern correlations

<i>Ayurvedic factor</i>	Classical meaning	Modern equivalent	Clinical relevance
<i>Prakriti</i>	Nature and qualities of food	Nutritional composition and metabolic response	Personalized dietary selection
<i>Karana</i>	Food processing methods	Food technology and nutrient bioavailability	Digestibility and gut health
<i>Samyoga</i>	Food combinations	Nutrient interaction and dietary compatibility	Prevention of inflammatory disorders
<i>Rashi</i>	Quantity of food	Portion control and caloric regulation	Obesity and metabolic syndrome prevention
<i>Desha</i>	Habitat and environmental influence	Environmental nutrition and local food systems	Climatic adaptation and immunity
<i>Kala</i>	Seasonal and temporal factors	Chrononutrition and circadian biology	Metabolic regulation and preventive health

<i>Ayurvedic factor</i>	Classical meaning	Modern equivalent	Clinical relevance
<i>Upayoga Samstha</i>	Rules of food intake	Mindful eating and behavioural nutrition	Digestive and psychological health
<i>Upayokta</i>	Individual consuming food	Precision nutrition and nutrigenomics	Individualized therapeutic dietetics

3. PATHOGENESIS AND LIFESTYLE DISORDER CORRELATION

3.1 Improper Dietary Practices and Disease Initiation

Ayurveda emphasizes that improper dietary habits (*Ahara Asatmya*) are among the primary causes of disease manifestation. Violation of the principles of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana*-such as inappropriate food combinations, excessive quantity, improper meal timing, unsuitable processing methods, and consumption without considering digestive capacity-results in disturbance of physiological homeostasis and initiates pathological processes.[18]

Contemporary lifestyle patterns characterized by excessive intake of processed foods, high-calorie diets, irregular meal timings, overeating, emotional eating, and sedentary behaviour significantly contribute to metabolic dysfunction and chronic diseases. *Ayurveda* interprets these disturbances primarily through the concepts of *Agnimandya*, *Ama*, and *Dosha* Vaishamya.

3.2 *Agnimandya* as the Central Pathological Event

Agni is regarded as the fundamental regulator of digestion, metabolism, tissue nourishment, and vitality in *Ayurveda*. [19] Proper functioning of *Agni* ensures adequate digestion and assimilation of nutrients, whereas impaired digestive fire (*Agnimandya*) leads to incomplete metabolism and toxic metabolite formation.

Improper dietary practices such as excessive food intake (*Ati Rashi*), incompatible food combinations (*Viruddha Samyoga*), untimely eating (*Akala Bhojana*), and heavy processed foods impair digestive efficiency and disturb metabolic balance. Repeated suppression of digestive capacity eventually weakens Jatharagni, leading to abnormal transformation of nutrients.

Modern medicine correlates this concept with impaired metabolism, mitochondrial dysfunction, altered digestive physiology, and reduced metabolic adaptability. Sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy dietary patterns contribute to metabolic slowdown, obesity, insulin resistance, and impaired glucose utilization.

3.3 Formation of *Ama* and Systemic Pathology

According to *Ayurveda*, improperly digested food undergoes pathological transformation into *Ama*, a toxic metabolic intermediate characterized by heaviness, stickiness, obstruction, and inflammatory potential.[20] *Ama* obstructs bodily channels (*Srotorodha*), impairs tissue metabolism, and initiates disease processes.

From a modern perspective, *Ama* may be correlated with metabolic endotoxemia, inflammatory metabolites, oxidative stress products, gut-derived toxins, and abnormal lipid intermediates. Chronic consumption of processed foods, trans fats, refined sugars, and chemically preserved diets contributes to systemic inflammation and metabolic dysfunction.

Emerging scientific evidence demonstrates that chronic low-grade inflammation plays a major role in obesity, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, and metabolic syndrome. Persistent inflammatory responses induced by unhealthy dietary habits resemble the *Ayurvedic concept of Ama-mediated pathology*.

3.4 *Dosha Imbalance and Metabolic Dysfunction*

Improper dietary practices disturb the equilibrium of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Dosha*, leading to systemic metabolic imbalance.[21] Excessive consumption of heavy, oily, sweet, and sedentary lifestyle-promoting diets predominantly aggravates *Kapha Dosha*, resulting in obesity, dyslipidaemia, insulin resistance, and metabolic syndrome.

Similarly, excessive intake of spicy, fermented, fried, and processed foods may aggravate *Pitta Dosha*, contributing to inflammatory disorders, hypertension, and oxidative stress. Irregular eating patterns, fasting, excessive dry foods, and psychological stress aggravate *Vata Dosha*, impairing digestion, absorption, gut motility, and neuroendocrine regulation.

Modern biomedical concepts such as endocrine imbalance, altered lipid metabolism, chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, and autonomic dysfunction show close resemblance to *Dosha-mediated metabolic disturbances described in Ayurveda*.

3.5 *Correlation with Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome*

Obesity (*Sthaulya*) is considered one of the major consequences of impaired dietary regulation and *Kapha*-dominant metabolic dysfunction.[22] Excessive caloric intake, overeating, lack of physical activity, and consumption of energy-dense processed foods contribute to abnormal fat accumulation and metabolic derangement.

Ayurveda explains obesity through *Meda Dhatu Vriddhi*, *Agnimandya*, and *Ama* accumulation. Chronic metabolic overload ultimately impairs tissue nutrition and promotes complications such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and dyslipidaemia.

Modern research identifies obesity as a chronic inflammatory state associated with oxidative stress, adipokine imbalance, mitochondrial dysfunction, and insulin resistance. These mechanisms strongly parallel *Ayurvedic concepts of Ama, Srotorodha, and Dosha Dushti*.

3.6 *Diabetes Mellitus, Insulin Resistance, and Dyslipidaemia*

Improper dietary habits and metabolic imbalance contribute significantly to the development of type 2 diabetes mellitus and dyslipidaemia. Excessive intake of refined carbohydrates, sugars, processed fats, and irregular meal timing impairs glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity.[23]

Ayurveda describes *Prameha* as a disorder associated with excessive nourishment, *Kapha* aggravation, metabolic dysfunction, and tissue derangement. Impaired digestive and tissue metabolism leads to abnormal accumulation of pathological metabolites and disturbed glucose homeostasis.

Modern studies reveal that chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, gut microbiome disturbances, and ectopic fat accumulation contribute significantly to insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome. These findings support the *Ayurvedic* understanding of systemic metabolic toxicity arising from improper dietary practices.

3.7 Gut Dysbiosis and Chronic Inflammation

Recent scientific evidence highlights the central role of gut microbiota in metabolic health, immunity, inflammation, and chronic disease development.[24] Unhealthy diets rich in processed foods, preservatives, refined sugars, and unhealthy fats alter microbial diversity and intestinal permeability, resulting in gut dysbiosis.

Ayurveda conceptually correlates disturbed gut function with impaired *Agni*, *Ama* formation, and *Srotodushti*. Improper food combinations, untimely meals, and unsuitable dietary habits disturb digestive harmony and promote pathological metabolite accumulation.

Gut dysbiosis is now strongly associated with obesity, inflammatory bowel disorders, insulin resistance, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. Thus, the *Ayurvedic principles* of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* appear highly relevant in preserving gut health and preventing chronic inflammatory diseases.

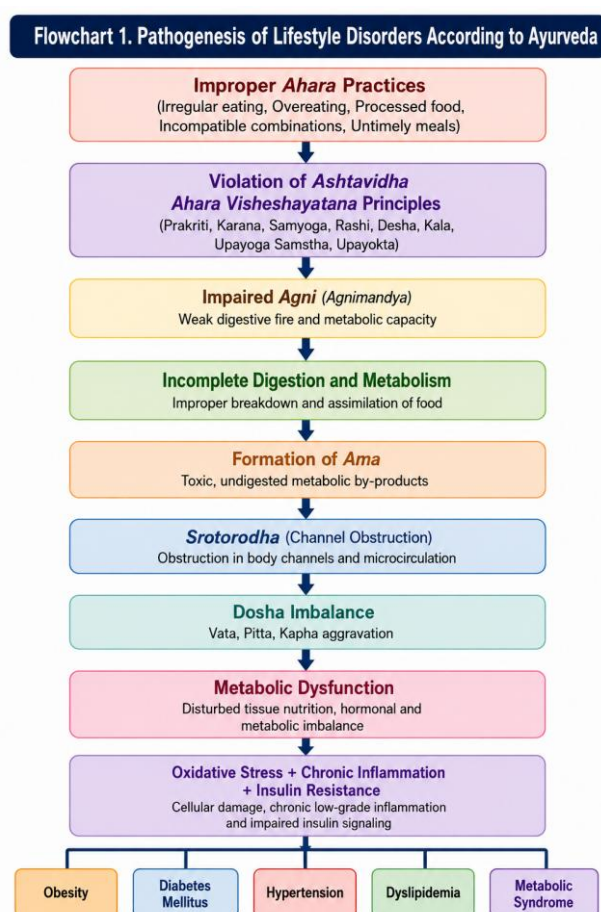


Figure 1. Pathogenesis of lifestyle disorders according to *Ayurveda*.

4. PREVENTIVE PERSPECTIVES OF ASHTAVIDHA AHARA VISHESHAYATANA

The concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* represents a highly advanced preventive nutritional framework in *Ayurveda* that emphasizes individualized dietary planning, digestive health, environmental adaptability, and disciplined dietary behaviour. In the modern era of rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs), these principles provide significant

preventive and public health relevance by promoting metabolic balance, gut health, and sustainable lifestyle practices.

4.1 Personalized Nutrition

One of the most remarkable features of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* is its emphasis on individualized dietary planning. *Ayurveda* recognizes that dietary suitability varies according to constitution (*Prakriti*), digestive capacity (*Agni*), age, habitat, season, and disease condition.[25] This personalized approach closely resembles modern concepts of precision nutrition and nutrigenomics.

Individuals with dominant *Kapha Prakriti* may benefit from light, warm, and low-calorie diets, whereas *Vata* dominant individuals require nourishing and unctuous foods for maintaining physiological balance. Such individualized dietary planning helps prevent obesity, diabetes mellitus, metabolic syndrome, and gastrointestinal disorders.

Modern scientific research increasingly supports personalized nutrition models for improving metabolic outcomes, glycaemic control, and long-term dietary adherence. Thus, the *Ayurvedic framework* provides a practical and sustainable model for preventive healthcare.

4.2 Seasonal Dietetics

The principle of *Kala* highlights the importance of seasonal dietary adaptation (Ritucharya) in maintaining physiological equilibrium. *Ayurveda* explains that seasonal variations influence *Dosha*, digestive strength, metabolism, and immunity.[26]

During summer, cooling and hydrating foods are recommended to prevent dehydration and *Pitta* aggravation, whereas winter requires nourishing and energy-rich diets to support stronger digestive activity. Failure to adapt dietary habits according to season may contribute to impaired metabolism, weakened immunity, and increased disease susceptibility.

Modern chrono nutrition and circadian biology similarly emphasize the role of meal timing and environmental adaptation in metabolic regulation. Seasonal dietary planning therefore plays an essential role in preventive nutrition and immune resilience.

4.3 Quantity Regulation

The concept of *Rashi* emphasizes proper quantity regulation and moderation in food intake. *Ayurveda* advocates consumption of food according to digestive capacity and satiety rather than emotional or excessive eating.[27]

Overeating impairs *Agni*, promotes *Ama* formation, and contributes to obesity, dyslipidaemia, insulin resistance, and cardiovascular diseases. Conversely, inadequate nutrition may result in tissue depletion and metabolic weakness.

Modern nutrition science strongly supports portion control and caloric regulation in preventing obesity and metabolic syndrome. Scientific evidence demonstrates that excessive caloric intake and sedentary behaviour are major contributors to chronic diseases worldwide.

Therefore, quantity regulation serves as a cornerstone of preventive healthcare and healthy aging.

4.4 Mindful Eating

The principle of *Upayoga Samstha* includes proper dietary conduct and mindful eating behaviour. *Ayurveda* advises consumption of food in a calm mental state, at appropriate speed, and with proper attention toward digestion and satiety.[28]

Mindless eating, emotional eating, excessive screen exposure during meals, and hurried eating patterns disturb digestion and metabolic regulation. Modern behavioural nutrition research indicates that mindful eating improves satiety perception, digestive efficiency, glycaemic control, and psychological well-being.

Mindful eating practices also reduce stress-related overeating and obesity risk. Thus, *Ayurvedic* dietary discipline provides an important behavioural strategy for prevention of lifestyle disorders.

4.5 Digestive Capacity-Based Diet Planning

Ayurveda emphasizes that dietary intake should always correspond to the strength of *Agni* (digestive fire). Even wholesome foods may become harmful if consumed beyond digestive capacity.[29]

Individuals with impaired digestion require light, easily digestible foods, whereas stronger digestive capacity can tolerate heavier nourishment. Ignoring digestive adaptability leads to *Agnimandya*, *Ama* formation, gut dysfunction, and metabolic disorders.

Modern gastroenterology and nutritional sciences increasingly recognize the importance of digestive health, gut microbiome integrity, and metabolic flexibility in disease prevention. Personalized meal planning based on digestive efficiency demonstrates strong relevance in contemporary preventive medicine.

4.6 Public Health Nutrition

The principles of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* have broad implications in community nutrition and public health promotion. The increasing prevalence of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases reflects widespread dietary imbalance and unhealthy lifestyle practices.[30]

Ayurveda promotes consumption of fresh, locally available, seasonal, and minimally processed foods along with disciplined eating habits. These principles align closely with modern recommendations for sustainable nutrition and NCD prevention.

Public awareness programs based on *Ayurvedic dietary principles* may contribute significantly toward reducing the burden of chronic diseases, improving nutritional literacy, and promoting healthy food behaviour at the community level.

4.7 Lifestyle Medicine and Integrative Healthcare

Lifestyle medicine emphasizes evidence-based modification of diet, physical activity, stress, sleep, and behavioural habits for prevention and management of chronic diseases. The concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* integrates many of these principles through a holistic and preventive approach.[31]

Ayurveda recognizes diet as both preventive and therapeutic, influencing metabolism, immunity, mental health, and longevity. Integration of *Ayurvedic dietary principles* with modern nutritional sciences may offer effective strategies for managing obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and gut-related disorders.

The concept also supports integrative healthcare models that combine personalized nutrition, behavioural modification, preventive medicine, and sustainable health practices.



Figure 2. Preventive model of Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana.

4.8 Practical Applications of Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana:

- Personalized diet planning according to constitution and digestive capacity

- Seasonal dietary guidelines for community health promotion
- Mindful eating interventions for obesity prevention
- Portion-control strategies for metabolic syndrome management
- Gut health promotion through compatible food combinations
- Public health nutrition awareness programs
- Integrative dietary counselling in lifestyle disorder clinics
- Incorporation into preventive and lifestyle medicine protocols

5. THERAPEUTIC RELEVANCE OF ASHTAVIDHA AHARA VISHESHAYATANA

5.1 Therapeutic Importance of Dietary Regulation in *Ayurveda*

Ayurveda considers *Ahara* as one of the most important therapeutic tools for maintaining health and managing diseases. Classical *Ayurvedic texts* emphasize that proper dietary regulation itself acts as medicine, whereas improper diet becomes a major cause of disease manifestation.[32] The concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* provides a comprehensive framework for individualized therapeutic dietetics based on digestive capacity, constitutional factors, environmental adaptation, quantity regulation, food processing, and dietary behaviour.

Unlike generalized nutritional approaches, *Ayurveda* advocates personalized dietary modifications according to *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Satmya*, disease condition, age, and seasonal influences. These principles exhibit significant similarity with modern concepts of medical nutrition therapy, precision nutrition, and functional dietary science.

5.2 *Pathya-Apathya* and Therapeutic Dietetics

The concepts of *Pathya* (wholesome diet) and *Apathya* (unwholesome diet) are fundamental components of *Ayurvedic therapeutics*. Foods compatible with an individual's digestive capacity, constitution, disease condition, and metabolic status are considered *Pathya*, whereas incompatible dietary substances aggravating disease pathology are categorized as *Apathya*. [33]

In lifestyle disorders, dietary incompatibilities such as processed foods, refined sugars, excessive fats, incompatible combinations (*Viruddha Ahara*), and irregular meal timing contribute to metabolic dysfunction and chronic inflammation. Therapeutic implementation of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* helps identify suitable dietary practices while avoiding disease-promoting food habits.

Modern medical nutrition therapy similarly emphasizes individualized dietary modifications to prevent disease progression and improve metabolic outcomes.

5.3 *Agni*-Based Dietary Modification

Ayurveda considers *Agni* as the central regulator of digestion, absorption, tissue metabolism, and vitality.[34] Therapeutic dietary planning according to digestive capacity is therefore essential in disease management.

Individuals with *Mandagni* require light, warm, easily digestible foods possessing *Deepana* and *Pachana* properties, whereas those with *Tikshnagni* benefit from cooling and nourishing diets. Improper dietary practices that overload digestive capacity contribute to *Ama* formation, gut dysfunction, and metabolic derangement.

Modern nutritional sciences correlate this principle with metabolic adaptability, digestive efficiency, caloric tolerance, and gut metabolic regulation. Dietary interventions targeting gut health and metabolic restoration closely resemble *Ayurvedic Agni*-based nutrition.

5.4 Disease-Specific Dietary Planning

The principles of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* facilitate disease-specific dietary planning by considering food nature (*Prakriti*), quantity (*Rashi*), timing (*Kala*), processing (*Karana*), and individual adaptability (*Upayokta*).

In obesity and metabolic syndrome, light (*Laghu*), low-calorie, fibre-rich, and *Kapha*-pacifying diets are recommended. In diabetes mellitus (*Prameha*), foods with low glycaemic effect, high digestive compatibility, and metabolic regulatory properties are preferred.[35] Patients with hypertension benefit from low-salt, anti-inflammatory, stress-reducing, and *Pitta*-pacifying dietary regimens.

Similarly, in irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), dietary planning according to digestive sensitivity and gut tolerance helps restore digestive balance. In polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), metabolic regulation through low-inflammatory and insulin-sensitizing diets plays a significant therapeutic role.

Modern precision nutrition and disease-specific dietary protocols strongly support these individualized *Ayurvedic dietary principles*.

5.5 *Satmya* Adaptation and Personalized Nutrition

Satmya refers to adaptation or suitability of diet according to individual habituation and tolerance.[36] *Ayurveda* acknowledges that abrupt dietary changes may disturb digestion and metabolism even if the food is inherently wholesome.

Therapeutic dietary interventions therefore require gradual adaptation based on individual tolerance, cultural habits, and digestive capacity. This principle reflects remarkable similarity with modern personalized nutrition and nutrigenomics, which recognize genetic and metabolic individuality in dietary responses.

The concept of *Satmya* also highlights the importance of long-term dietary sustainability, patient compliance, and behavioural adaptability in therapeutic nutrition.

5.6 Therapeutic Meal Timing and Circadian Regulation

The factor *Kala* within *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* emphasizes the importance of meal timing and seasonal adaptation.[37] *Ayurveda* recommends food consumption according to digestive strength, daily biological rhythms, and seasonal variations.

Irregular eating patterns, late-night meals, excessive fasting, and untimely food intake impair *Agni* and promote metabolic disorders. Modern chrono nutrition similarly demonstrates that circadian rhythm disruption adversely affects glucose metabolism, lipid regulation, gut microbiota, hormonal balance, and cardiovascular health.

Therapeutic meal timing therefore plays an important role in obesity management, diabetes control, and metabolic syndrome prevention.

5.7 Quantity Regulation and Metabolic Balance

Proper quantity of food (*Rashi*) is considered essential for maintaining digestive and metabolic equilibrium.[38] Overeating leads to *Agnimandya*, obesity, insulin resistance, and *Ama* accumulation, whereas undernutrition impairs tissue nourishment and vitality.

Modern scientific evidence strongly supports portion control and caloric regulation in the prevention and management of obesity, diabetes, dyslipidaemia, and hypertension. *Ayurveda* further individualizes food quantity according to digestive capacity, physical activity, age, and disease condition, reflecting advanced principles of therapeutic nutrition.

5.8 Gut Health and Functional Nutrition

The *Ayurvedic* understanding of digestion, *Agni*, and *Ama* closely parallels modern concepts of gut health and microbiome regulation. Proper dietary practices according to *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* support digestive efficiency, microbial balance, nutrient assimilation, and immune regulation.

Functional foods possessing antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, prebiotic, and metabolic regulatory effects align with *Ayurvedic concepts* of wholesome and compatible nutrition. Increasing evidence demonstrates that dietary interventions targeting gut microbiota significantly influence obesity, insulin resistance, IBS, PCOS, and cardiovascular diseases.[39]

Thus, the therapeutic application of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* offers a holistic and scientifically relevant framework for integrative dietary management of lifestyle disorders.

Table 2. Therapeutic application of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* in lifestyle disorders

Lifestyle disorder	<i>Ayurvedic dietary principle</i>	Therapeutic application	Modern correlation
Obesity	<i>Rashi, Kala, Prakriti</i>	Caloric moderation, light diet, meal timing regulation	Weight management and caloric restriction
Diabetes mellitus	<i>Agni, Rashi, Pathya</i>	Low-glycaemic, digestible dietary planning	Medical nutrition therapy
Hypertension	<i>Kala, Samyoga</i>	Low-salt, anti-inflammatory diet	Cardioprotective nutrition
IBS	<i>Satmya, Karana</i>	Easily digestible and gut-compatible diet	Gut microbiome regulation
Dyslipidaemia	<i>Prakriti, Rashi</i>	Fat regulation and metabolic correction	Lipid-lowering dietary therapy

Lifestyle disorder	Ayurvedic dietary principle	Therapeutic application	Modern correlation
PCOS	<i>Agni, Kala, Satmya</i>	Insulin-sensitizing and anti-inflammatory diet	Precision nutrition and hormonal balance

6. EVIDENCE-BASED SCIENTIFIC CORRELATION

6.1 Scientific Basis of Ayurvedic Dietary Principles:

Contemporary evidence supports mindful eating, chrononutrition, personalized nutrition, gut-microbiome research, quantity regulation, and seasonal or environmental adaptation as relevant parallels to *Upayoga Samstha*, *Kala*, *Upayokta*, *Agni-Ama*, *Rashi*, and *Desha-Kala*. These correlations support research hypotheses rather than direct biological equivalence.[40-45]

Table 3. Modern scientific evidence supporting principles of Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana

Ayurvedic principle	Scientific correlation	Evidence-based relevance	Preventive/therapeutic utility
<i>Upayoga Samstha</i>	Mindful eating	Improves emotional eating, satiety awareness, and eating behaviour	Obesity prevention and behavioural nutrition
<i>Kala</i>	Chrononutrition and meal timing	Aligns food intake with circadian rhythm and metabolic regulation	Diabetes, obesity, and cardiometabolic health
<i>Upayokta</i>	Personalized nutrition	Individual variation in dietary response due to genes, microbiome, and metabolism	Precision diet planning
<i>Agni-Ama</i>	Gut microbiome and inflammatory metabolites	Gut dysbiosis is linked with obesity, IBS, diabetes, and inflammation	Gut health and metabolic correction
<i>Rashi</i>	Portion control and caloric moderation	Supports energy balance and weight management	Obesity and metabolic syndrome management
<i>Desha-Kala</i>	Seasonal and environmental nutrition	Local and seasonal diet supports adaptability and sustainability	Preventive and public-health nutrition
<i>Karana</i>	Food processing and bioavailability	Processing affects nutrient absorption, glycaemic response, and gut health	Digestibility and functional nutrition

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Failure of Uniform Dietary Models

This limitation is increasingly recognized in precision nutrition, which emphasizes individualized dietary planning based on biological variability.[47] *Ayurveda* had already articulated this concept through *Prakriti*, *Agni*, *Satmya*, *Desha*, *Kala*, and *Upayokta*. The principle of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* therefore offers a classical yet highly relevant model for overcoming the inadequacy of uniform dietary prescriptions. These observations support individualized dietary planning across classical and contemporary frameworks. [46-48]

7.2 Gut Health and *Agni Siddhanta*

The *Ayurvedic concept* of *Agni* is central to understanding digestion, metabolism, immunity, and disease prevention. Impaired *Agni* leads to incomplete digestion and production of *Ama*, which can be correlated with metabolic endotoxins, inflammatory mediators, oxidative stress, gut dysbiosis, and impaired barrier function.[49] Modern research increasingly recognizes the gut microbiome as a key regulator of immunity, metabolism, neuroendocrine signalling, inflammation, and cardiometabolic health.

This correlation does not imply that *Agni* and gut microbiome are identical concepts; rather, it suggests that both frameworks emphasize digestive-metabolic integrity as a foundation of systemic health. *Agni Siddhanta* provides a functional clinical model, while modern microbiome science provides molecular and mechanistic insights. Their integration may open new avenues in gut-centered preventive and therapeutic strategies.

7.3 Future Research Opportunities

Despite strong conceptual relevance, further scientific validation of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* is required. Future research should focus on developing standardized assessment tools for *Prakriti*, *Agni*, *Satmya*, dietary compatibility, and meal behaviour. Clinical trials may evaluate *Ayurveda*-based personalized nutrition protocols in obesity, diabetes, IBS, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, and PCOS.

However, current research gaps include lack of large-scale randomized trials, heterogeneity in *Ayurvedic* diagnostic criteria, limited biomarker-based validation, and insufficient integration of classical dietary principles into contemporary clinical nutrition. Addressing these gaps may strengthen the scientific foundation of *Ayurvedic nutrition* and support its inclusion in integrative preventive healthcare.

8. CONCLUSION

The concept of *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* represents a comprehensive and scientifically relevant framework of *Ayurvedic nutrition* that emphasizes individualized dietary planning, digestive-metabolic balance, and preventive healthcare. The present review highlights that improper dietary habits, incompatible food combinations, irregular meal timing, excessive quantity, and neglect of individual digestive capacity contribute significantly to the pathogenesis of contemporary lifestyle disorders such as obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, IBS, PCOS, and metabolic syndrome.

Future interdisciplinary research integrating *Ayurveda* with microbiome science, nutrigenomics, metabolomics, and behavioural nutrition may further validate and expand the clinical applicability of these classical principles. Ultimately, *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana* underscores the timeless *Ayurvedic* vision that food should not merely sustain life, but should serve as a personalized therapeutic tool for achieving holistic health, disease prevention, and sustainable well-being.

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