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CONCEPT OF *SWASTHVRITTA* TOWARDS THE PEDIATRIC AND GERIATRIC HEALTH CARE

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Abstract

The main principles of *Ayurveda* are *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshnam* and *Aturashya Vikar Prasamanam* through which it maintains the health by following various dietary and lifestyle modifications and prevent from diseases through various therapeutic measures. *Swasthavritta* is one of the unique concepts of *Ayurveda* which deals with the rules of healthy conduct and their effects on the various aspects of the life of an individual. Every nation has children, adults and old age people in their population and it is reported that in 2050, 1/5th of the population of world will be around 65 years of age. *Jarachikitsa* (geriatrics) is the branch of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* which deals with the disease and care of aged people. According to *Ayurveda*, discipline is the key to achieve good health. *Swasthavritta* helps in improving qualitative aspects of a healthy living.

Key-Words: *Swasthavritta*, *Swasthya*, Geriatrics, Therapeutic.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda works on various therapeutic principles such as *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshnam* which means maintaining the health of a healthy person and *Aturashya Vikar Prasamanam* which means treating the diseases. Nowadays, due to increasing urbanization, pollution, stress, competition, peer pressure; people are adapting to unhealthy lifestyle which causes many lifestyle disorders and other diseases. *Bala* (immunity) plays a very important role in protecting the individual from various types of infection, diseases etc. This resistance can be attained by the individual through proper *Ahara, Vihara*; living in stress free, pollution free environment. According to *Ayurvedic* scholars, our body is influenced by the outside environment because our internal environment has some synchronization with external environment. So any change even in the external environment can also affect our body thus, it is very essential for us to follow such regimen which helps in adapting to the external environment easily.

Around 2050, world will have more than 1/5th of its population of elderly people around 65 years of age. In highly populous country like India, fertility rate is decreasing with time but on the other hand, elderly population is also increasing. This ultimately has socio-economic impact on the country as the dependency rate will also increase. Some common conditions affecting old age people are diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, alzheimer's renal problems etc. *Ayurveda* considers aging as the *Jaivik Swabhava* of life because there is a cycle of birth-senescence- death and life is mortal bounded by time. Thus we can strengthen our geriatric care system by combining it with safe and cost-effective *Ayurvedic* principles such as *Rasayana, proper Ahara, Vihara; Swasthvritta, Yoga, Panchkarma* etc.

Children play very important role in the development of a country. Today's children are tomorrow's adults and it is very necessary to develop their physical, mental and emotional health. Healthy children, then grow to healthy adult and then they can contribute towards the good economy. In this modern world, children are facing the major problems of malnutrition due to the unavailability of proper *Ahara; Sthoulya* (obesity) due to the lack of proper exercise and regimen; weak immunity, diseases due to improper *Ahara* and *Vihara*.

Concept of *Swasthvritta*

Swasthvritta word is derived from three *Sanskrit* words *Swa, Stha* and *Vrita*. *Swa* signifies inherent, one's own; *Av* signifies to protect and *Stha* signifies to live. Thus

Swastha word signifies one who stands to protect life. *Swastha* is a state when there is no imbalance in *Doshas*, *Dhatu*s of the body. *Vritta* word means maintaining purity by controlling one's own senses and mind. Thus *Swasthavritta* is a concept of *Ayurveda* based on three ideas which represent the efforts of the body to work in co-ordination. It means one who is controlling his senses, mind and fulfilling the body's requirement properly by doing all the essential duties. This leads to a healthy and stress free living. Some components of *Swasthavritta* are mentioned in **figure 1**.



Figure 1: Components of *Swasthavritta*

According to *Ayurvedic* scholars, there exist a relationship between lifestyle of a person and its health. They described the routine to be followed daily during day, night, with changing seasons, duties to be fulfilled towards social environment, adapting good habits etc. All these activities help in maintaining equilibrium of *Doshas*. When the person is in adult age, the lifestyle he is living is the result of his habits, behavior, *Ahara*, *Vihara*, which he is practicing since childhood. Thus the daily regimen, habits, control of mind and *Yoga*, etc. if performed since childhood then one can achieve the proper growth and development.

Some steps to be maintained by the children to achieve good *Swasthya*:

There should be a fix time schedule to wake up early in the morning (*Brahmamuhurta-Jagran*) after the age of three or five years, but it should not cause any trouble to the child. *Malotsarga* (defecation) habits are developed in the children around 2-3 years of age and vary widely. *Danta dhavana* (brushing) and *Jihva Nirlekhana* (tongue cleansing) habits should start when child is one and half year old by using soft bristle brush and baby tongue cleaner twice a day. This is necessary to

remove plaque and other deposits from the oral cavity to prevent the damage to the teeth. *Abhyanga* (oil massage) plays an important role in neonatal stage of life. It is necessary to strengthen the muscles and helps in faster growth and development of the body. *Snana* (Bathing) is the most important part of *Dinacharya*. Mother should take care of this when the baby is young after. After five or six years of age, child should be made to take bath by his own. *Nasya Karma* (oily nasal drops) is the procedure of administering medicated oil, *Churna*, *Kwatha* through nose to prevent the imbalance of *Doshas*. *Bhojan vidhi* can be *Swarna* or *Phala prashana*. *Vyayama* is the most important factor of *Dinacharya*. Sports and outdoor games play a crucial role in maintaining health of the children and also help in their mental, behavioral and social development. At night, *Ratribhojan* should be of light nature and it should be consumed before 2-3 hours of going to bed. *Nidra* (sleep) is a very important factor for good health. For children and old individual it is more than six-seven hours of sleep.

Vridhvastha

Ayurvedic scholars divided lifespan of an individual into three *Vaya* (parts) i.e. *Balyavastha*, *Madhyavastha*, *Vridhvastha*. *Vridhvastha* refers to the period after sixty to seventy years of age and is the last part of the lifespan. This stage is characterized by the predominance of *Vata Dosha*, decay of *Dhatus*, *Indriyas*, bodily functions etc. *Kalaka jara Vridhvastha* is attained after 60-70 years of age but *Akalaja jara Vridhvastha* (untimely aging) can occur due to excessive increase in *Vata-Pitta Dosha*. This can occur due to improper daily regimen, imbalance of *Tryostambha*, *Ojokshaya* etc. Therefore following steps should be followed to live a healthy life and to prevent the old age diseases:

- ***Dinacharya*** - According to *Ayurveda*, right regimen is necessary to live a long healthy, disease free life. Waking in *Brahma muhurta* provides you clean, pleasant, noise free atmosphere. Regular exercise not only improves the physical health but also the mental health. It reduces the anxiety, stress, depression; promote digestion, makes the person active, reduces obesity, improves the working of heart, kidney etc. After performing *Vyayama*, bathing with luke warm water is advised to clean the body and to reduce the tiredness. *Nasya* and eye care should also be done to maintain the eye sight. It is advised to do to *Abhyanga* on scalp and body with various oils such as *Tila taila*, *Narayan taila* etc. to increase the circulation; reduce the dryness of skin, stiffening of joints and to pacify the *Doshas*. *Dinacharya* helps in making a person

disciplined. This also includes following *Sadvritta*, *Yoga* and *Pranayam* therapies.

➤ **Ritucharya:**

Ayurveda always emphasized on maintaining relationship with environment. Seasonal changes affect our health in many ways and thus we have to adapt ourselves according to the changing environment. To promote *Swasthvritta*, *Ayurveda* has suggested maintaining equilibrium among *Doshas*, food and *Ritu* (season). For example- In *Vasant Ritu*, *Laghu* and *Ruksha Ahara* should be taken. In *Grishma Ritu*, *Madhur*, *Laghu* and *Snigdha Dravyas* should be consumed. In *Sharad Ritu*, *Madhu*, *Kshaya Rasa*, *Snigdha Dravyas* should be consumed.

➤ **Tryostambha** - According to *Ayurveda*, *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are the basic pillars of a healthy life. There is difference in nutritional requirement of an elderly person and they need more fluid intake. They should consume diet rich in fruits, vegetables, cereals. To give rest to the body sleeping is very essential. It helps in removing the stress, makes sense organs active and also helps in repairing of damaged cells. It is necessary to maintain proper sex life and avoid excessive indulgence. Through the practice of celibacy with proper routine, one can avoid the various ailments of old age.

➤ **Panchkarma** - It is the process of removing the toxins from the body which help in purification and rejuvenation of body. It consists of various procedures of detoxification which result in balancing of *Doshas* in the body.

➤ **Rasayana** - It stands for rejuvenation therapies to prevent the premature ageing and to cure the various ageing related disorders. Drugs can be used on the basis of their actions such as *Ashvagandha* can be used to reduce the stress. *Amalaki* contains antioxidants which can control the effect of free radicals. *Ayurveda* focuses on improving the general immunity of the body so that person can be protected from various diseases. They help in promoting physical and mental health. It is advised to take *Ghee*, fruits, vegetables, milk daily as they also act as *Rasayana* and help in achieving good health.

Balyavastha is considered as an important phase of an individual which determines its health, well being and behavior for whole of the life. A particular lifestyle of an individual is the result of its habits, behavior, and living pattern. *Ayurveda* has suggested an ideal pattern for living the life and thus it has given the unique concept of i.e. maintenance of health through code of conduct. There is various code of conduct

such as *Dinacharya*, *Ratricharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* etc. These regimen changes according to the stage of life and one should adapt themselves so that there can be synchronization among the external and internal environment. The right way of living is following the right personal, social, mental and moral conduct which is necessary to live a stress free, healthy life.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has a unique concept of *Swasthvritta* which deals with the aim of *Swasthasya Swasthya rakshanam*. It explains the ways to prevent the disease and preserving and promoting the health by changing some habits. Food taken in proper manner maintain the equilibrium of *Doshas* and *Dhatus* but is should be taken in accordance with seasonal changes. Excessive of anything is prohibited in *Ayurveda*. Thus it is advised to use everything in balanced manner. Through *Swasthvritta* one can achieve *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. Children are the wealth of the nation, they are the future generation therefore they should be taught to follow the right code of conduct and regimen from childhood only. *Balyavastha* has *Kapha* predominance thus; one should give more importance to develop immunity at this stage. *Vridhvastha* is the last stage of lifecycle in which all the degenerative changes occurs. By following proper regimen and *Rasayana* therapy, a person can live long disease free life.

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