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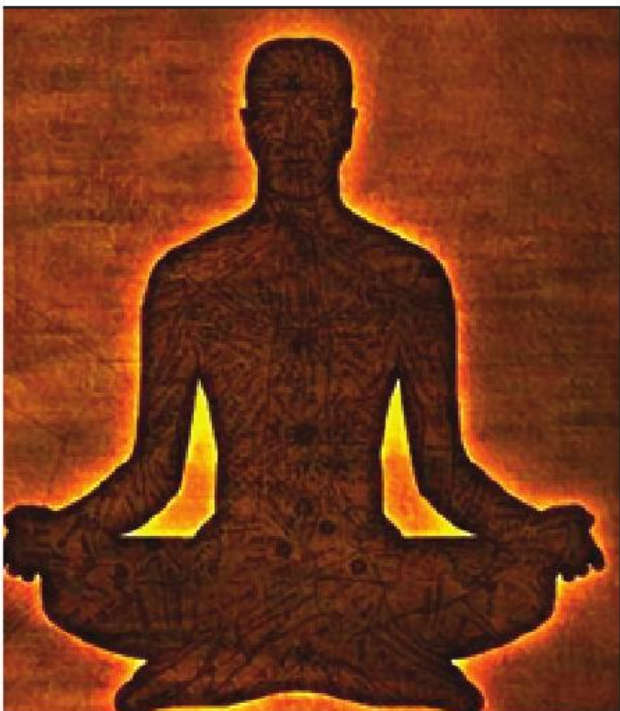
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PATIENT FIRST

An integrated approach can do wonders in patient care

It is said that the more we change, the more we remain the same. This is true about several human endeavours, and more so in our struggle against hunger and disease.

We have advanced the frontiers of knowledge, developed new technologies and perfected our tools but the fight remains as intense as it has been ever since history began. People still die of hunger and diseases.

While politics and political ambitions undermined the fight against hunger, lack of direction derailed our progress towards health for all. The World Health Organisation had dreamed of 'Health For All by 2000,' but it remains just that: a dream.

All major civilisations, including China, India, Europe and Africa, have developed indigenous medical practices. They may have differed in their content and practice, but the basis of every indigenous branch was the same: use natural sources to fight diseases. The best example is Ayurveda: in lush green Kerala, herbs made effective drugs while in the arid north it was metals that did the job. The end remained the same, but the means differed. And vastly.

The emergence of modern medicine as a powerful and effective branch of knowledge changed all this. Its basic principles are the same in every corner of the world. Its sights were so firmly hooked to the distant but expanding horizons that it never looked around and saw the indigenous practices.

Modern medicine benefited the most from path-breaking scientific discoveries while the indigenous medicinal practices did not bother to adapt to the situation and make most of it. The result: there is a wide gap between the two, leading them to fighting for the same cause. They went their separate ways and made their own advancements. This is one area where the sum will be less than its total as a lot of them negate each other.

Our special story package illustrates how a correct diagnosis and precise treatment in time can save many a precious life. All that is required is that the patient be guided rightly about the choices he needs to make. Ayurveda offers effective cures for several chronic diseases for which modern medicine has very little to offer. The painful fact is that people are not aware of how to approach the right physician for a disease and by the time he approaches an Ayurveda physician, he would have been late.

We believe that it is time that practitioners of different branches of medicine sit together and understand the strengths and weaknesses of each of the branches and make each one complimentary to the other so that the patient gets the benefit. The government should initiate a process whereby common goodness is shared. We do not advocate a mix of all. Let each branch retain its identity and go ahead with research and experiments in its own branch. At the same time, let the practitioners of each branch know the strengths of the other so that the patient gets the best of both worlds. Lest we fail. Again.

Remember, disease is the enemy, and it is the only enemy.

VOL. 4 ISSUE NO.1 JANUARY - MARCH 2006

Ayurveda

& HEALTH TOURISM

India: Rs. 50/-
USA: \$5
UK Pound: 3.8
Singapore: S\$9
Canada: C\$7
UAE: Dirham 17
RNI No. KERENG/2006/20510

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Printed, published and owned by Benny Thomas, FM Media Technologies
Pvt Ltd, 32/2451 A5, 2B, Relcon Retreat, Prasanthi nagar, Road 2,
Manimala Road, Edappally, Kochi - 682024, Ernakulam. Printed at M/s
Five Star Offset Printers, 39/3144, Chelavettil Estate, Valanjambalam,
Ernakulam 682 016, Ph: 0484-2356605

Editor : Benny Thomas.

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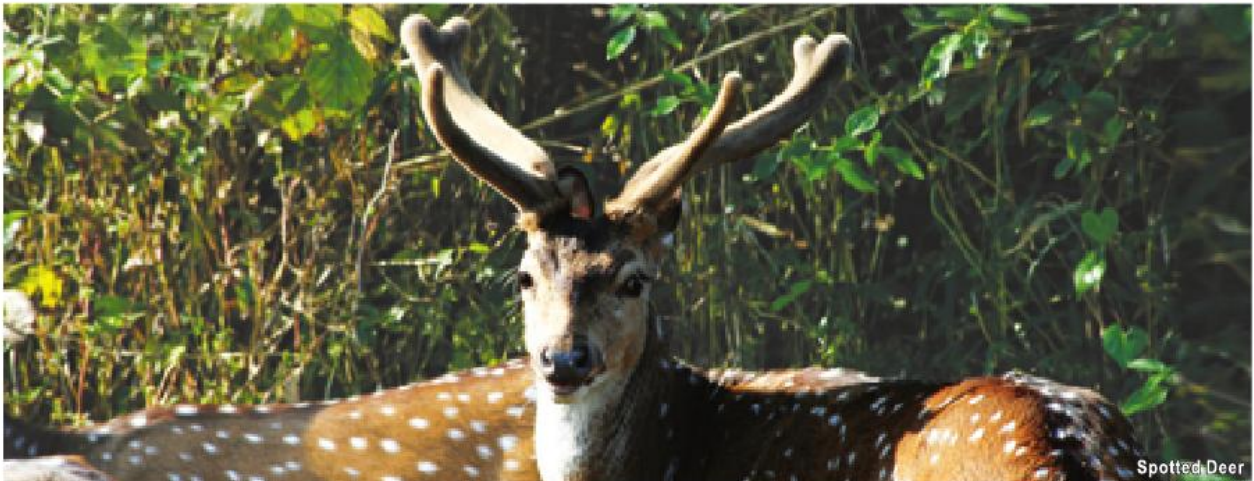
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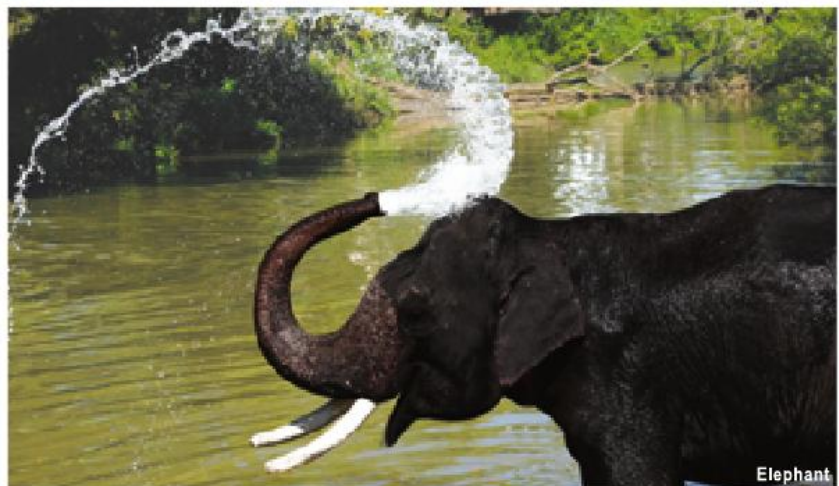
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Grant for toxicity research

The department of Rasa Shastra under the faculty of Ayurveda in Banaras Hindu University has got a Rs 3.5 crore UGC grant to conduct advanced research on toxicity and the safety profile of herbo-mineral formulations. Dr Neeraj Kumar, head, department of Rasa Shashtra, said the safety profile of ayurvedic drugs made from herbo-mineral formulations had become very important. The department also conducts a number of researches on the impact of heavy metals, like lead, copper and iron, on the body while preparing various bhasma, including Nag Bhasma.

Birla turns to Ayurveda

The Rs 3,000-crore Yash Birla group has acquired majority stake in the

Kozhikde-based Ayurvedic service provider Kerala Vaidyashala, marking its foray into the healthcare business. The rechristened Birla Kerala Vaidyashala plans to invest Rs 50 crore over the next three years to expand its presence across the country. "Our group has identified healthcare, especially Ayurveda, as a major focus area for the future and we are in the process of defining numerous forays into this sector. Our aim is to create a commanding and leading presence in Ayurvedic and herbal healthcare," said Yash Birla, chairman of the Yash Birla Group. As part of its immediate plans, Birla Kerala Vaidyashala has earmarked Rs 50 crore to open 200 centres, owned and franchisee, high end luxury stay spas and cruise spas and 19 economy centres across Maharashtra. Birla Kerala Vaidyashala will have its spa centres across Kerala, Goa, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai.

HLL takes Ayurveda route

Hindustan Latex Limited, in its new avatar as HLL Lifecare seeking a pie in the larger healthcare industry, is introducing a range of products in the areas of women's healthcare, healthcare generics, symptomatic relief, nutraceutical and personal healthcare in partnership with Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala. The first product to come out of the union is Lactohil, an

Ayurvedic proprietary medicine and total health tonic. M Ayyappan, HLL Lifecare Chairman and Managing Director, said the partnership would propagate the efficacy of Ayurveda medications among the masses.

Tab on massage parlours

In a move to promote authentic Ayurveda and to stop the spread of its spurious versions, the Kerala government is planning to issue licence for Ayurvedic centres and massage parlours in the state. Health Secretary Vishwas Mehta said the rules enforcing quality of Ayurvedic Health Care Centres are being framed under the Kerala Ayurveda Health Centres (Issue of Licence and Control) Act.



Masseurs from Japan

In a sign of increasing popularity of Ayurveda, a team of women therapists have flown in from Japan to train in Ayurvedic massage at a resort in Kerala. "It was a rarest of rare experience," said Azahina Nowko, one of the dozen participants in the intensive five-day course held at 'Ayurveda Village' at the Poovar Island Resort near the famed Kovalam beach here. M.R. Narayanan, who heads the facility said they had therapists from Italy trained Ayurvedic massage at the Village

earlier.

Karnataka to establish Ayurveda varsity

The Karnataka government will establish an Ayurveda university in the State next year, Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa said. He said that his Government would make efforts to establish the university before 2010.



AVS hits techno-path

The Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala's new Rs 11-crore factory will come out with products targetting Generation Next and the urban population. Soft gel capsules of Kshirabalatailam (101), Dhanwantaratailam (101), Balatailam, Gandhatailam and Maharajaprasarinatailam will form the first batch of products of the factory, to be commissioned next year, said AVS Technical Services head Dr T S Murali. It will also manufacture kashayams as coated tablets, taila as gel or balm and avalehas and churnas as flavoured granules.



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THE PITHA



Continuing with the series on the Tridosha theory in Ayurveda, Ashtavaidyan Vaidya-madham Cheriya Narayanan Namboothiri talks about the Pitha, the second among the tridoshas. The energy-generating dosha, Pitha controls the metabolic activities in the body. When in perfect balance with the other two doshas, Pitha helps one maintain an energetic lifestyle and keep the intellect sharp.

Pitha is the basic energy-generating element for the metabolic operations of the body. It is formed by a combination of the elements fire and water, which are transformative in nature: they continuously modulate and control each other.

The word Pitha has its origins from the concept thaap-santhaapee, meaning to burn or to warm up.

The fire element in Pitha, including gastric fire or digestive fire, controls the action of enzymes and amino acids that play the pivotal role in metabolism, and that of the neurotransmitters and neuropeptides which control thinking.

Pitha is hot, sharp, light, oily, liquid, and spreading in nature. It is mainly located in the small intestine, stomach, sweat glands, blood, fat, eyes and skin. It controls functions of both the body and intellect such as digestion, nutrition, metabolism, body temperature, skin colouration, the lustre of the eyes as well as intelligence and understanding. During digestion, Pitha is predominant in the middle stage while Kapha is active in the preliminary and Vata in the last stages.

Five types of Pitha

The five types of Pitha are Pachaka, Ranjaka, Sadhaka, Aalochaka and Bhrajaka.

Pachaka Pitha, located in the stomach, is concerned with splitting up of ingested food within the GI tract, absorption of the nutrient portion (sara) and elimination of the waste portion (kitta). Pachaka Pitha also controls digestion and protects the other four pithas.

Ranjaka Pitha imparts red colour to

rasa (plasma, serum, lymph). According to Susruta, Ranjaka Pitha is located in the liver and the spleen. Sadhaka Pitha, located in the heart, controls the proficiencies of the mind such as intellect and genius. According to Charakapani, the author of Charaka Samhita, it controls saurya (courage), bhaya (fear-complex), krodha (rage), harsha (exhilaration) and moha (confusion).

Aalochaka Pitha is present in the eyes and controls sight. This Pitha is further divided into two-Chaksurvaishesika and Buddhivaishesika. Chaksurvaishesika Pitha is associated with retinal pigments which are concerned with the absorption of light falling on the retina and the transmission of impulses via the optic tract. Buddhivaishesika deals with its interpretation in the cerebral cortex.

Bhrajaka Pitha, located in the skin, is responsible for the complexion. Arunadatta, the commentator of *Ashataghridaya*, says that Bhrajaka Pitha (that which makes shining) is named so as it performs dipana and pachana of medicines applied in the form of abhyanga, lepa and pariseka.

Characteristics

People with Pitha nature are medium built: their chests are not very flat and they show a medium prominence of veins and muscle tendons. They may have coppery, yellowish, reddish or fair complexion with fair or reddish, soft, shiny and warm skin. Their hair may be fine red, fair or dark brown in colour and straight or thinning, shiny and silky in nature. Their eyes may be gray, green or copper-brown. They have a strong metabolism, good di-



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When you experience excessive body heat, digestive problems, a tendency to be hostile or angry and controlling, impatience, a tendency to put forth excessive effort to achieve goals, vision difficulties, you can assume that you are suffering from Pitha imbalance. Balanced Pitha gives good digestion, vitality, good problem-solving skills, intelligence, decisiveness, boldness and courage and a bright complexion.

gestion and resulting strong appetites. They have an inclination for sweet, bitter and astringent tastes and enjoy cold drinks. Their body temperature may run a little high, and hands and feet will tend to be warm. Pitha people cannot tolerate sunlight, heat or work hard. Their sleep is of medium duration but uninterrupted. These people produce a large volume of urine and the faeces may be yellowish, liquid and soft.

People with Pitha constitution have a sharp mind, good concentration power and exceptional management and leadership skills. They have a competitive spirit and are passionate and romantic. They are sexually more active and more enduring than Vata people. They are often stubborn, prejudiced and authoritarian in nature. They will be irritated, angry, aggressive and assertive when Pitha imbalance occurs.

Effects of Pitha imbalance

When Pitha is out of balance, the body shows distinctive physical and behavioural signs or symptoms. The general symptoms include acidity, diarrhoea, food allergies, bad breath, disturbed sleep, weakness due to low blood sugar, ulcers, hot sensations in the stomach or intestines, fever, anaemia and jaundice. On the behavioural front, they become easily angry, criti-

cal of self and others, frustrated and aggressive.

Pitha imbalance can cause fevers, inflammatory diseases, acidity, ulcers, rashes and digestive disorders. Besides, it can also cause loss of strength, heart problems, skin and hair problems and jaundice.

Factors that increase Pitha

Exposure to heat, intake of excess red meat, salt, spicy or sour foods, indigestion, overwork, exercising at mid-day, consumption of excess antibiotics, alcohol and dried vegetables can aggravate Pitha dosha.

Food

As people with Pitha constitution have good digestion, a strict food regime is the ideal solution to maintain good health. To restore Pitha balance and to avoid imbalance, the following guidelines can be followed.

- Avoid excessive heat, oily, steamy and salty food, rigorous exercises that increase body heat, etc.
- Take only take sweet, bitter, and astringent food.
- Take cool, refreshing food in summer. Reduce the consumption of salt, oil and spices. Have salads, milk and ice-cream.
- Avoid coffee, orange juice and doughnuts.
- Avoid oily, hot, salty, and heavy foods such as fried food. Instead consume starchy foods such as vegetables, grains and beans. Avoid the tendency to overeat under stress.
- Avoid pickles, yoghurt, sour cream and cheese.
- Avoid processed and fast food as they tend to be heavy on salt and sour tastes.
- Consume milk, grains and vegetables in large quantities.

	Vata	Pitha	Kapha
Day	Evening	Mid day	Morning
Night	Late night	Mid night	Early night
Age	Old age	Youth	Child hood
Food	Colonic phase	Intestinal phase	Gastric phase



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Nature - the core element of Purnagram

The human body is conditioned by its surroundings. So, healing becomes effective, long-lasting and complete only when the prevailing atmosphere is tranquil, relaxing and supportive in every way. At the Purnagram Holistic Village, nature is the core element in the creation of an ideal healing environment. Designed to evoke optimism and promote wellness in patients, Purnagram is a fine example of how healthcare facilities are built around the healing properties of nature.

According to Dr Krishnan Namboodiri, Chief Physician of Purnagram, 'Nagarjuna Ayurvedic Group is deeply committed to the values and principles of Ayurveda. The Group strives to fulfill the requirements of contemporary ethos with a constant effort to explore treatment modalities of Ayurveda. It focuses on speciality treatments of Kerala to answer the current health needs of the world.'

Located at Mulamkuzhy, just 25 km from the Cochin International Airport and 56 km from Cochin city, Purnagram is set on 8 acres of lush vegetation, flowering plants, fruit-bearing trees and medicinal herbs. Along one side of Purnagram flows the Periyar (Purna River), which greatly adds to the restorative ambience and exceptional charm of the Village.

Ayurjeevanam - the guiding principle at Purnagram

Purnagram follows the concept of Ayurjeevanam which views each individual as a unique personality, with his own physical, mental and social traits. This implies that no two persons are exactly alike in their constitution (Prakruti).

'Ayurjeevanam, as conceived by Purnagram, strives to enrich the life of every patient with a holistic, comprehensive and integrated approach to healthcare,' explains Dr C S Krishnakumar, Chief Physician, Nagarjuna Ayurvedic Group.





Full-fledged infrastructure, amenities and services

While housing all modern resort-class amenities and services, Purnagram is a complete holistic healing centre, strictly following the treatment protocols developed by Nagarjuna Ayurvedic Group, based on the time-tested ayurvedic scriptures and the ancient wisdom they embody. 'We bring the entire resources of the Group for the benefit of our patients,' adds Dr Manoj Kumar, Chief Physician of the Group's Kalady Centre.

Ms Christien Maria Tomei

Relations Manager, Purnagram

Meet Ms Christien Maria Tomei, Relations Manager at Purnagram. A native of Germany, she has worked with several reputed Ayurvedic institutions in the past.

Ms Tomei serves as an interface between Purnagram and patients from Europe and makes them feel completely at home. 'When our patients leave the premises, with their health fully restored, we want them to take with them the best experience and the fondest memories of Purnagram,' says Mr V G Jathavedan Nambodiripad, Executive Director of the Group.

Dietary discipline is basic to sound health. By offering food that promotes health and wellbeing, the Purnagram encourages patients to make diet control an indispensable part of their everyday life. The Village also offers special classes on vegetarian cooking and Ayurvedic way of life.

Accommodation: Purnagram provides elegant accommodation consisting of 30 rooms and independent cottages of four different categories:

- Nalukettu rooms
- Twin-cottages
- River-facing cottages
- River-facing cottages with their own attached treatment rooms

Other amenities include a well-equipped vegetarian kitchen, a spacious dining hall, a recreation room, yoga and meditation hall, separate treatment blocks, and a well-stocked pharmacy.

Treatment process

Purnagram offers a wide range of treatment and wellness programmes. The duration and mode of treatment are decided by a panel of doctors headed by the Chief Physician. Patients may contact members of the team through email or telephone and get the basic details and nature of treatment so that they can come well prepared. Purnagram offers a wide range of treatment modules including preventive, curative, immunity building, detoxification and rejuvenative therapies, apart from a broad spectrum of disease-specific treatments.

Major diseases handled

- Joint disorders
- Male infertility
- Psoriasis
- Diabetes mellitus
- Obesity
- Neuromuscular disorders like paralysis
- Allergic conditions
- Hyper cholestrolaemia
- Lifestyle-related problems
- Age-related ailments
- Vision disorders
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Migraine
- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Hyperacidity
- Piles
- Sciatica
- Chronic sinusitis
- Hair loss, acne, pimples

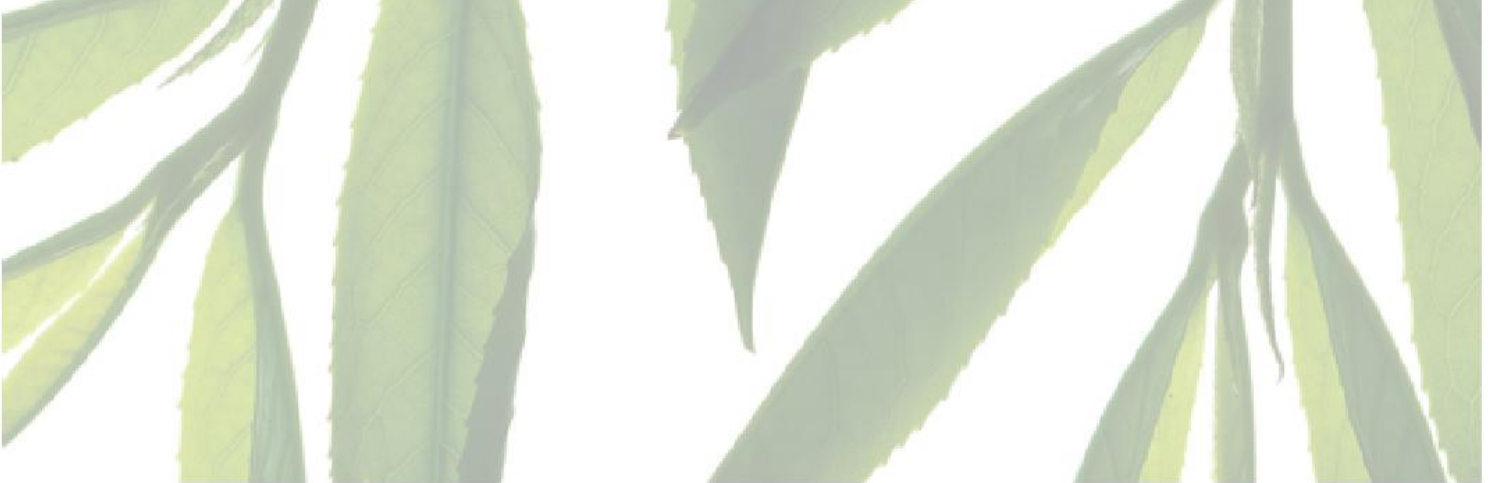



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THE POPULAR DRUG

Dr M S Noushad

Naa rishyathe ethi arishtam, what does not deteriorate is arishtam, say classical Ayurveda texts. The medicinal properties of drugs in arishtams are very active and give immediate results as they are in the medium of self-generated alcohol and are hence easily digested and absorbed. The alcohol also ensures more shelf-life for arishtams compared with water extractions such as kashayams and powders such as choornams.

Arishtams and asavams are some of the most common and widely used formulations in Ayurveda. It is so popular with people that even those who seek treatment in modern medicine are familiar with arishtams such as Dasamoolarishtam and Jeerakarishtam.

Arishtams and asavams are unique medicinal formulations in that they can be kept for a long time without deterioration. The classic texts on Ayurveda defines arishta as 'Naa rishyathe ethi arishtam: what does not deteriorate is arishtam.

Arishtams and asavams have five major components. They are:

- Dravadravyam (medicament in decoction form)
- Gudam (jaggery)
- Prekashapa choornam (medicament in powder form)
- Honey
- Dhathaki flower (flower of Woodfordia floribunda)

Preparation

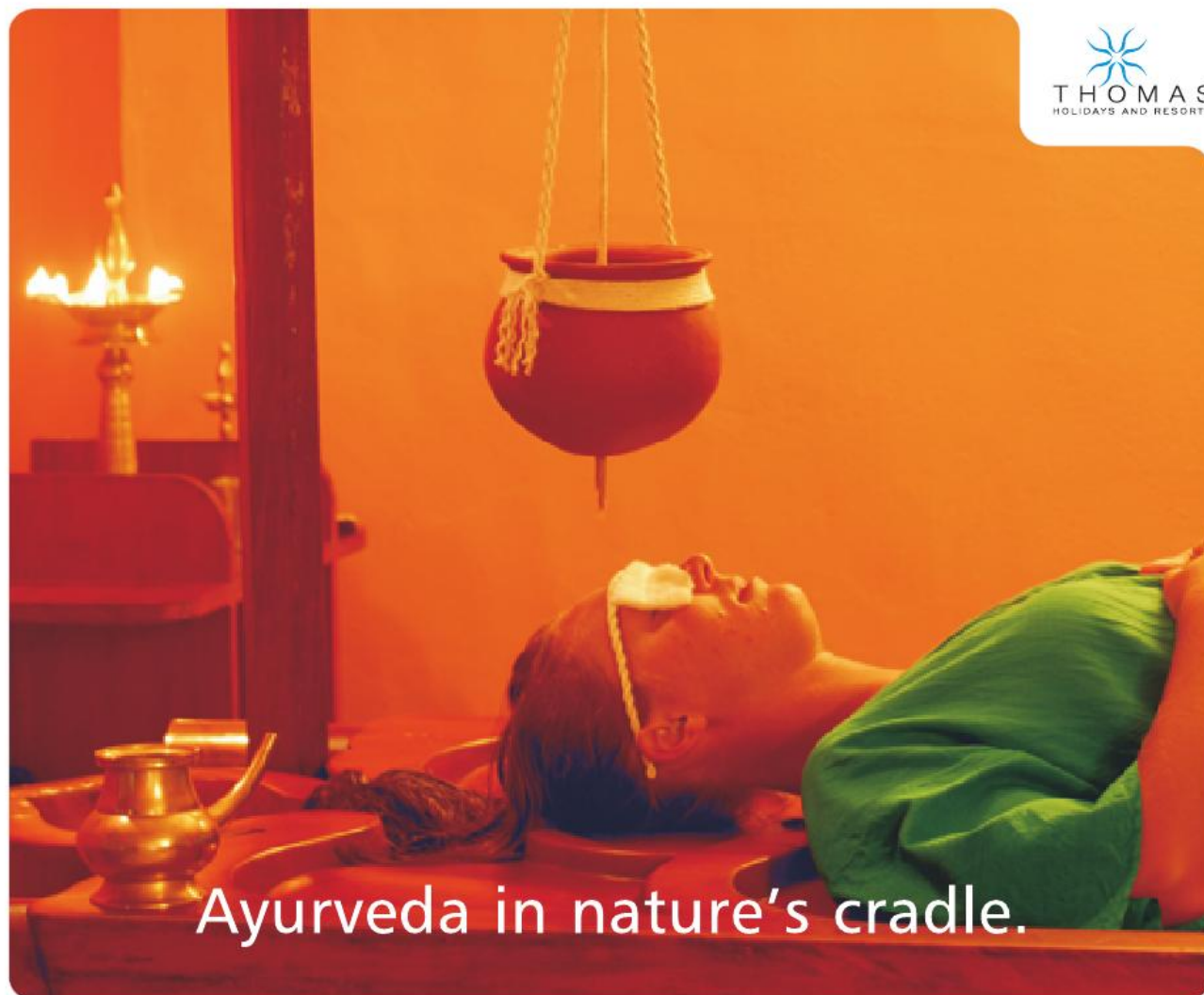
Arishtams and asa-

vams belong to the same group of drugs, with a slight difference in the manufacturing process. An Arishtam is prepared by soaking the drug materials either in powder form or as water extracts (kashayam) in a solution of sugar or jaggery, as the case may be, for a specific period of time. One essential ingredient in the formulation is powdered Thathiri Pushpam (flower of the Woodfordia floribunda), which acts as a natural fermenting agent. The

compounds undergo fermentation in a properly closed container, either in a special room or in a cellar, to ensure normal fermentation. This process facilitates easy extraction of the active principles contained in the drugs. A constant temperature is maintained during the process as varying temperature may impede or accelerate fermentation.

The preparation of asavams differs slightly in that the aqueous medium for arishtam is a decoction of powdered drugs where as in asavam, the medium is boiled and cooled water.





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Arishtams, unlike popular belief, are not a medicine for all digestive problems. In fact, diseases related to Pitha or hyper acidity will aggravate if they are taken without medical advice.

Name	Medicine description	Ingredients
Draksharishtam	Useful for Anemia, insomnia, heart disorder, asthma, cough and throat disorders.	draksa guda, tvak, ela, patra, kesara, priyaggu.
Balarishtam	Neurological disorders, back pain, numbness and pain in the extremities.	bala, azvagandha, rasna, ela, prasarani.
Aswagandharishtam	Neurological and mental disorders, psychosis, epilepsy, insomnia, fainting and loss of memory.	aswagandha, musali, manjistha, haritaki, rajanidvaya, madhuka, rasna, vidari, partha, musta, trivrt, ananta, zyama, candana, raktacandana, vaca, citraka, maksika, dhataki, vyosa, trijata, priyaggu, nagakesara.
Saraswatharishtam	Memory loss, depression, neuroses, psychoses, epilepsy, insomnia, stammering.	brahmi, satavari, vidarika, abhaya, uzira, ardraka, misisita, maksika; rentuka, trivrt, kana, devapuspa, vaca, kustha etc.
Abhayarishtam	piles, indigestion, skin diseases, abdominal pain, improves digestion.	abhaya, dhatri, kapittha, visala, lodhra, marica, vella, elavaluka, gudaa, dhataki.

The medicinal properties of drugs in arishtams are very active and give immediate results as they are in the medium of self-generated alcohol and are hence easily digested and absorbed. The alcohol also ensures more shelf-life for arishtams compared with kashayams (water extraction) or choornams (powder). During the bulk manufacturing of kashayams, special care is taken to monitor the alcohol percentage, acidity, pH values and the presence of total soluble solids to ensure the final product quality.

Arishtams are used to cure various ailments such as indigestion, constipation, general debility and arthritis.

The average adult dose of arishtams is 25-30 ml twice a day. This can be varied by the physician according to the severity of the disease and the body constitution of the patients. Since arishtams contain sugary material, extra care is needed when administering them to diabetic people.

Arishtams, unlike popular belief are not a medicine for all digestive problems. In fact, diseases related to Pitha or hyper acidity will aggravate if they are taken without medical advice. However, there is no harm in taking them on an empty stomach. Arishtams are the most commercialised Ayurvedic product in the market because of the presence of alcohol, though self-generated, in them. One must be very careful in buying them from reliable manufacturers and stores as even purely alcoholic drinks are being hawked as arishtams in local markets.

There are many Arishtam Yogams (formulae) mentioned in various classical texts like Charaka Samhitha, Susrutha Samhitha, Ashtanghrudayam, Bhaishajyaratnavali, Srgadhara Samhitha and Sahasrayogam.

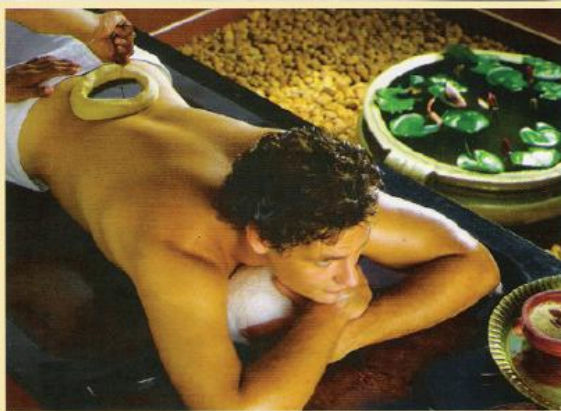
A few major Arishtam preparations are Dasamoolarishtam, Abhayarishtam, Saraswatharishtam, Punarnavasavam, Lohasavam, etc.



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The Ayurveda People

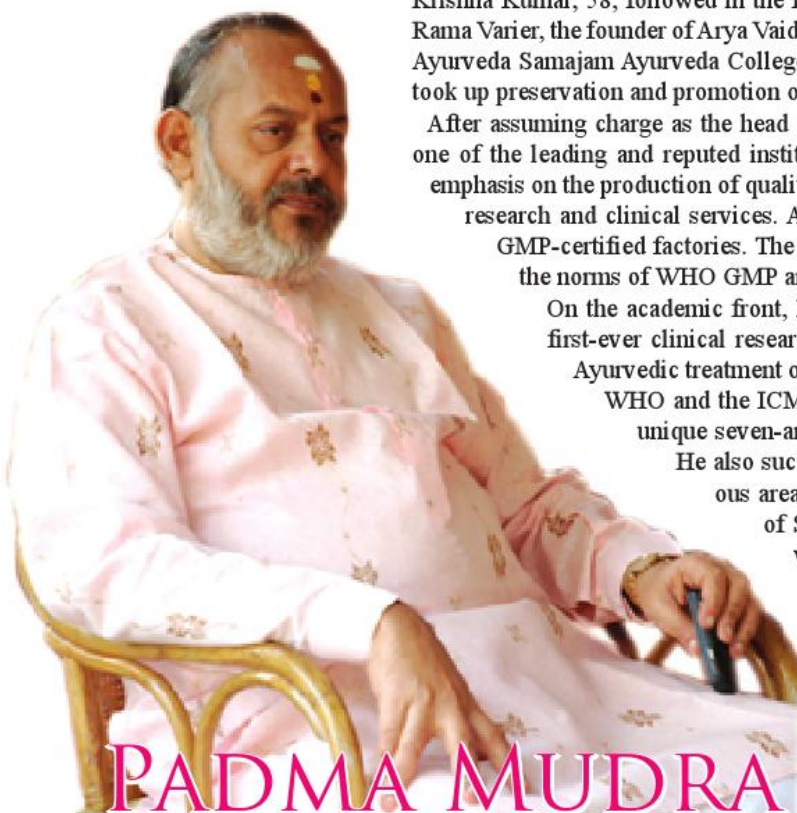
In a gesture that is widely seen as recognition for Ayurveda, the Government of India has conferred the Padma Shree, the country's fourth highest civilian honour, on Dr P R Krishna Kumar, managing director, Arya Vaidya Pharmacy, Coimbatore, Krishna Kumar, 58, followed in the footsteps of his illustrious father, Arya Vaidyan P V Rama Varier, the founder of Arya Vaidya Pharmacy, and studied Ayurveda in the Keraleeya Ayurveda Samajam Ayurveda College, Shoranur. On completion of the DAM course, he took up preservation and promotion of Ayurveda as his life's mission.

After assuming charge as the head of AVP, Krishna Kumar nurtured the company into one of the leading and reputed institutions in Ayurveda in the country. He laid special emphasis on the production of quality medicines, the promotion of Ayurvedic education, research and clinical services. AVP now manufactures around 450 products in two GMP-certified factories. The state-of-the-art new factory, opened last year, meets the norms of WHO GMP and US FDA.

On the academic front, Krishna Kumar was instrumental in conducting the first-ever clinical research in traditional medicines to study the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment on rheumatoid arthritis under the joint auspices of the WHO and the ICMR in 1977. Later, he conceived and implemented a unique seven-and-a-half-year educational programme in Ayurveda.

He also successfully implemented a number of projects in various areas related to Ayurveda, approved by the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Environment.

"No practice though I have a degree, and no marriage. That was my decision," Krishna Kumar said, on his total dedication to Ayurveda. In a free-wheeling chat with **K Govindan Nampoothiry** at the AVP's Majlis Health Park at Thrissur, he shared his thoughts on the honour, the present and future of Ayurveda, and his concept of education. Excerpts:



Padma Shree is a green signal for future projects, says AVP chief Dr P R Krishna Kumar

On Padma Shree

It is a recognition for Ayurveda and not a personal one. However, it marks a new beginning in my life as it makes me more responsible. I have to do more for the field. Anyway, this award is a green signal for the remaining work and I know I have 'miles to go before I sleep.'

Ayurveda today

Frankly, we lack good physicians now. Ayurveda is a special branch of medicine in that, to know it, one must have a thorough knowledge of other subjects such as Sanskrit, Vedas and astrology. Our acharayas were masters of all these subjects, and they had spiritual consciousness, too. They were able to diagnose the disease correctly by a look at the patient, and decide on the treatment. Though it may not be applicable in the modern world, the present physicians should at least develop spiritual consciousness.

Moulding youngsters

Knowing the requirement of a bunch of creative youngsters, including good physicians, we set up an Divyam academy of values with an emphasis on meaningful and value-based education. Its focus is to enhance and optimise the potential of each child. Here, the children learn yoga, meditation, dance, music, drawing, painting, craft, karate, astrology and Ayurveda. Here, they can think according to their interest; there is no burden of syllabus and homework. And, they learn that they are the masters of their lives.

Interestingly, since we believe in the power of astrology, we check the horoscope of each child to see if he or she is destined to become an Ayurveda physician. And, if so, we will train him/her for it at the initial stage itself.

On the need of revamping Ayurveda syllabus

Nowadays, BAMS students are learn-

ing outdated syllabus. We have submitted several proposals to the Central Government, but are yet to see action taken on them. I am afraid that this apathy by the authorities concerned will lead to the death of our ancient medicine system.

Science and Ayurveda

All branches of science should think together and contribute to the development of Ayurveda. For example, the invention of stethoscope was a contribution of physics to allopathy. Likewise, new areas in science, such as biotechnology and nanotechnology, should work for the development of our medical system, which has a history of 5,000 years.

On expansion plans for AVP

We are not in a hurry to grow. At present, we are aiming at providing quality treatment for patients rather than opening centres in every nook and cranny.



The pioneer in scientific treatment in Ayurveda, the Arsha Ayurveda Hospital located in a beautiful



greenery hill side adjacent to the Kovalam Sea, having result oriented treatment records, positioned in the green leaf ranking of Tourism Department, stick on the top position in the Ayurvedic treatment is headed by

Dr. Raveendran Nair. He told that, Arsha Ayurveda Hospital is founded with a lofty motive that aims at upholding the glory of this tradition and keeping you hale and hearty. Led by a dedicated team of seasoned doctors it provides expert indigenous therapies such as 'Panchakarma' and 'Marma'. Whatever your ailment, the Arsha Faculty diagnosis it with utmost

care and prescribe surefire remedies. Arsha has been founded with a noble resolve to uphold the heritage of Ayurveda and impart its splendours to the sick and the needy, without diluting its essence and energy. It has served scores of patients from far and near, adding to its clientele. Dr. Raveendran Nair said, "we are deep-versed in the principles and practices of this ancient science". Arsha's construction was as per the tenets of 'Vastu' having a cool ambience, quite ideal to highlight the quintessence of Ayurveda. There is a Dhyana Mandapam [Meditation Hall] at the premises where one can do Yoga, relax, concentrate and be at perfect communion with oneself.

There are a number of time-tested treatment modules based on the quintessence of Ayurveda. Arsha has perfected quite a few that how proved to be most effective.



Arsha has a heritage cure for whatever ailment you are suffering from, be it seasonal, skin-deep or chronic.



That is exactly why our clientele is ever on the rise and to cater to the increasing demands, he added.

Arsha has its major hospital at Poomkulam West, and the City Unit, at Kunnum Pura Junction near Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram. Their sister concerns include Arsha Ayurveda Medicals and Arsha Ayurvedics and Clinical Labs.



Arsha's Special Clinics:

- Back pain and Neck pain ● Fistula and Anorectal ● Osteo arthritis
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Nagarjuna Merit Awards

Dr Anilkumar (Kannur University), Dr. E. Remya (MG University), Dr. Hima Alias, (Calicut University) and Dr. Lima K Sen (Kerala University) have bagged the annual Nagarjuna Merit Award for 2007-08 for those who top the final BAMS examination in their respective universities. State Drugs Controller (Ayurveda) Dr T Sivadas gave away the awards at a function held at the Parassinikadavu Ayurveda Medical College on January 16. Annakutty Joseph from Idukki won the Oushadham-ithram Award for 2007-08 instituted by the Nagarjuna Research Foundation in recognition of her work promoting the cultivation of medicinal plants and trees.

Seminar on salakyatantra

Dr Pankaj Pathak and Dr T VA Rekha from GAMC Mysore and Dr. Veena Shakhar, GAMC Bangalore topped the paper presentation competition organized as part of 'Update Salakyatantra', a national seminar on ophthalmic complications of systemic diseases, held at the Government Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram on January 27 and 28. Dr Pankaj's paper dealt with 'Computer Vision Syndrome' while Dr Rekha won the prize for her paper on 'Role of Agasthya Hareethaki rasayana as an immuno modulator in Allergic Rhinitis'. Dr Veena Shakhar's paper was on 'Role of Ayurveda in Preventive Ophthalmology'.

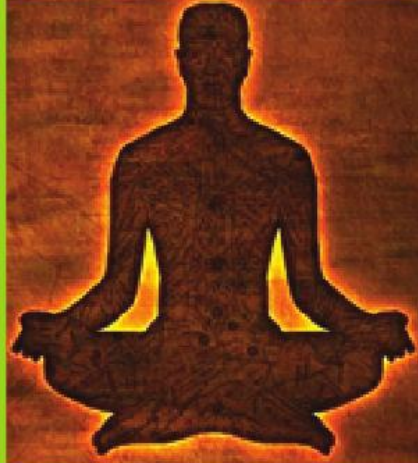
The seminar was organised to improve the theoretical and practical knowledge of Shalakyatantra, making the faculty of the other departments aware of the Ophthalmic complications of general diseases and updating the knowledge of the physicians of the Salakya department," said P K Santhakumari, head, department of Salakyatantra which organized the programme.



German Ayurveda team visits BHU

A nine-member group from Germany-based Rosenberg Society for Holistic Health and Education that runs European Academy of Ayurveda visited the faculty of Ayurveda at the Banaras Hindu University to explore ways of establishing a network of excellence and a bilateral task force with AYUSH. Mark Rosenberg, managing director of the Society said the visiting delegation had talks with the officials of the ministry of health and family welfare, Government of India in this regard.

The team of Ayurvedic students and teachers were on a week-long visit under a learning programme governed by a memorandum of understanding signed between the two institutions.



BEYOND MASSAGE

Diseases can be depressing. Especially when cure looks impossible. Despite humankind making big advances in science, technology and medical science, there are people amidst us suffering from diseases which are serious and some, chronic. They may have exhausted all options. For them, they can try nature. Try Ayurveda.

It is a matter of great pleasure and pride for all those who believe, profess and practise Ayurveda that its acceptability is increasing globally, day by day. People all over the world seek the ancient Indian system of medicine for cure of diseases, some really chronic.

But unfortunately, the image Ayurveda has got in the immediate past is that of message therapy. True, Sodhana Chikitsa is an integral part of Ayurveda, but it has a more meaningful, deep and useful branch called samana chikitsa. When the cost of treatment skyrockets the world over, Ayurveda has low-cost and effective treatment methodologies.

Our effort is to project this aspect of Ayurveda: the Samana Chikitsa branch and its strengths. We have met with people who have specialised in six areas: eye diseases, auto-immune diseases, cancer, fistula, infertility and psoriasis.

The attempt is not to claim that Ayurveda offers ready cure to all diseases. Our stress is far from that. If a patient approaches the right physician at the right time, Ayurveda has a solution, and the physician expects utmost cooperation from the patient.

The definitions and descriptions of diseases in classical texts may not be easily digested by the generation which lives on fast-food. For them Ayurveda has very little to offer. The cure is a joint effort of all stake holders—the patient, the physician, the drugs, the people around them, the diet, the nature in which the patient lives...

As a science which has evolved with nature, and one with a philosophy which encompasses the mind, body and soul, the prescriptions of Ayurveda may not be approved instantly by all. But the fact is that those who approach Ayurveda as a last resort are benefitted.

Most doctors we approached for this special package supported that patient should approach alternative medicine before all options are over. "I wish we had a strong interdisciplinary and integrated approach to diseases such as cancer," Dr C D Sahadevan, who specialises in cancer treatment, told us.

We share his concern.

Cover package text:

K GOVINDAN NAMPOOTHIRY





SAMANA AND SODHANA

Dr K Murali

Ayurveda is not just about panchakarma and rejuvenation. It can treat serious and chronic diseases through Samana Chikitsa, with the help of Sodhana Chikitsa.

Most new converts to Ayurveda stop at body massage when they start out seeking to understand the prowess of this ancient branch of medicine. It is a wonderful system that has minute details about body massage, they exclaim. They very passionately refer to panchakarma processes and even explain their benefits. In the humdrum, the true karma of Ayurveda—to bring relief to living beings through a holistic approach and by the administration of medicine—is forgotten. Samana chikitsa (pacification therapy), the branch of Ayurveda which treats patients by administering medicine, is often ignored or forgotten, while Sodhana chikitsa, or elimination therapy which encompasses panchakarma, has become the popular face of Ayurveda.

Both Samana Chikitsa and Sodhana Chikitsa define diseases on the basis of the tridosha theory and prescribe methods to cure them, with a difference though. Samana Chikitsa attempts at restoring the normality of the vitiated tridoshas by pacifying them through medication whereas Sodhana Chikitsa seeks to eliminate the vitiated 'doshas' from the body and relieve it from illnesses. While Samana Chikitsa was instrumental in popularizing Ayurveda in the past, Sodhana Chikitsa is its torchbearer today. And I feel there is today an imbalance in the importance people, including Ayurveda practitioners, attach with the two. This imbalance can vitiate Ayurveda in its true mission and hence should be corrected at the earliest.



A proper understanding of the way Ayurveda approaches bodily conditions will help differentiate between the two, and why one is preferred over the other in a given situation.

Ayurveda says the disturbed normalcy of the doshas could set off a chain reaction, troubling the other body elements such as dhatus and malas. There can be many reasons why the doshas are vitiated—some may be natural, such as seasonal variations and some man-made, such as the abuse or misuse of functions of sense organs, wrong body and food habits and suppression of body urges. But once the process is set in motion, then the body begins to suffer.

Ayurveda takes a holistic look at etio-pathogenesis—the cause, development and progress of a disease. Its mandate is to intervene in the process at any stage, attempt to reverse it and restore, if possible, the doshas to their normalcy. This is where samana comes to play its role. Ayurveda identifies the three phases of a disease as mild, moderate and severe and is treated according to the stage at which the patient suffers from it. The first two conditions—mild and moderate—are not emergency stages, and the physician should generally start off with Samana Chikitsa. He should examine whether a patient responds to the treatment or not, and then decide on the next course. The physician follows the principle of science as symptoms, studies the impact of drugs on the symptoms and then proceeds. He could resort to Sodhana Chikitsa if the disease is at the severe stage.

Ayurveda's efficacy in treating most diseases comes from the fact that it has a complete tool to address it. It does not, like other branches, look only at the present, but sees the past and the present and will assess what to do to secure a safe future. However, these tools are to be used very carefully and with the highest application of mind. That Ayurveda can offer solutions to several diseases considered chronic and defies treatment is because it has a comprehensive and holistic system to address the abnormality of the human body, treat it and bring to the normal stage.



Samana Chikitsa is easy on the patient because it attempts at treating the tridoshas and restores them to normalcy, while Shodhana attempts at expelling the vitiated doshas. All that is associated with Sodhana are severe: mostly it would necessitate hospitalisation.

But this is no easy task. A physician should be able to judge what is best for a patient and for the treatment of one particular stage of a disease. A proper understanding of the patient as well as the disease, and the determination of an efficient tool to handle it, are the keys in this process. I feel that the newfound popularity of Ayurveda through panchakarma sometimes stops the physician from objectively looking at the patient and the disease and then deciding the course of treatment.

Samana Chikitsa is easy on the patient because it attempts at treating the tridoshas and restores them to normalcy, while shodhana attempts at expelling the vitiated doshas. All that is associated with sodhana are severe: mostly it would necessitate hospitalisation. The patient and the treatment would be under the strict control of the physician, and the patient would have to submit

himself completely to the treatment and the physician. As a result, the cost of treatment would also go up.

This is not to say Sodhana Chikitsa should not be practiced, but to suggest that samana should always be the first option, unless the situation so warrants. A physician should decide on the treatment, which can very well be sodhana, only after a careful assessment of the patient's condition. The patients, especially those who are newly introduced to Ayurveda, also must understand this difference. I have friends who have had patients walking in asking for a sirovasti. All that such people had heard about is panchakarma. This image will not help Ayurveda, its practitioners or the patients. If we sincerely wish to propagate Ayurveda, then we must do it the correct way. It will benefit all the stakeholders.

The writer, son of eminent Ayurveda physician and ideologue K Raghavan Thirumulpad, is Reader, Ayurveda Medical College, Thripunithura.



OF THE IDEAL PATIENT

Dr K Krishna Kumar MD

Ayurveda seeks to help people lead a healthy life. Its development as a branch of medicine has close links with the life and nature where it has grown. For example, the climatic conditions and the awareness of the people of Kerala were conducive for it to take deep roots over the centuries. The people also had a perfect understanding of Ayurveda and its line of treatments. But today, it's no more the same, with people being forced to choose a lifestyle different from the old. Their approach to Ayurveda has also changed. But one needs to be mindful of the basics of Ayurveda and its approach to diseases to derive the maximum benefit.

Ayurveda has a systematic approach towards diseases and the patient. It seeks to help the body regain its immunity by self-rectification. As a holistic branch of medicine, Ayurveda concentrates more on prevention than on cure. And when treatment is found necessary, the stress is on the correction of food and lifestyle and on the avoidance of the causative factors. Ofcourse, medicines and procedures do play a part in the treatment procedure. Ayurveda treats the body as a whole, and is mindful of the relation between the body and the mind. The treatment is planned only after considering the different aspects of the patient, disease, climatic changes, habitat, etc. The physician decides on the treatment after studying the body constitution (prakruthi) of the patient, based on the Tridosha theory and deciding to which group

such as Vata, Pitha or Kapha constitution a patient belongs. This because Ayurveda suggests that any derangement to the balance of the tridoshas will be manifested as disease and their harmony as health. That is why two patients having the same disease will get different kind of treatments in Ayurveda.

Of disease

Ayurveda has solutions and remedies for various systemic disorders of every hue such as fever, bleeding disorders, cough, asthma, anemic disorders, jaundice, cardiac disorders, cancer (arbudam) and various skin diseases. Ayurveda also has effective treatment regimes for gynecological, obstetric, toxicological, surgical and ENT disorders.

Of time

Most Ayurvedic physicians say patients come to them at the chronic stage, after having experimented with every other system of medicine. Ayurveda is considered the last resort and so, precious time must have already been wasted by the time they come to an Ayurveda practitioner. This delay seriously affects the efficacy of treatment. Ayurveda insists that the sooner a patient begins the treatment, the better. This is because in the early stages of the disease, the conditions which favour the disease are minimal; the pathogens mild in nature and the amount of accumulated toxic materials, less. The disease could then be treated either with Sodhana Chikitsa (purification therapy which cleans up the toxic or morbid materials in the body) or with Samana Chikitsa (pacification therapy) with

internal medicines.

Of the physician

Ayurveda classics beautifully illustrate the qualities of a good physician. He should be well-versed and have proficiency in his subject, must have studied under a good teacher and possess a good understanding of the science. He should be well-experienced and efficient so that he can perform all the treatment procedures. He should have a very pleasant demeanour with very high standards of personal hygiene.

Of the patient

Ayurveda has a balanced view on the patient. It says the patient should be wealthy so that he can afford the treatment, and at the same time, the physician should take care of a poor patient as his son.

*“Anaathan rogino yatra
putravat samupacharet”*

(The doctor should consider a patient who has no support and is like an orphan as his own child).

The patient should have a clean character which will impress others as well as the physician. He must be obedient to the physician. He should follow the prescription and advice of the physician, and he should have good mental stability.

Of treatment

Ayurveda literatures insist that a physician decide on the treatment after carefully assessing the patient and his strength and ability to withstand it. The physician has to decide whether to go in for Samana Chikitsa or Sodhana Chikitsa after assessing the nature of the patient and the stage of the disease. If the disease is in its early stages, and the patient is weak, then samana chikitsa is preferred, and if the diseases in an advanced stage, and the patient can stand tough treatment methodologies, then Sodhana Chikitsa is prescribed. Sodhana Chikitsa aims at purifying the body of toxic materials which are responsible for the diseases. Purification can be achieved through the upward (mouth or nose) or downward movement (anal canal or through urethra) i.e., through the nearest root

where the morbid materials are most accumulated more.

Even when one is cured, the patient will be advised and trained to avoid the causative factors of the disease (nidana parivarjanam eva chikitsa). He will also be advised to correct his lifestyle so that he returns to a healthy and normal life.

Of Pathya

Pathya, or discipline in food and lifestyle, is key to the success of treatment. So much so that there are slokas which suggest that if one were to follow pathya, then there is no need of medicine. And if one does not follow the pathya, then there is no point taking medicines. This is because apathya, or lack of observance of pathya, will trigger the causative or promotive factors of the disease.

The fear of observing pathya often scares people from Ayurveda. One must understand that dietary and lifestyle controls are imposed to ensure that the body returns to proper health and that the disease does not recur. So, this regimen will be decided based on

the nature of the disease. It is true that certain physicians have prescribed pathya indiscriminately, putting people off Ayurveda.

Of taking medicine

Ayurveda advocates nearly eleven different times for the administration of medicine. These are selected depending on the pathology of the disease. That is why taking the medicine at the correct time, that which is prescribed by the physician, is very important. Otherwise, the expected effect will not be seen.

Of disease-free life

Prevention is better than cure. Following the right daily, seasonal and night regimens and a diet of prescribed food will help a person keep diseases away. And even if we do all these, toxic substances could accumulate in the body. Ayurveda also prescribes methods for the periodical cleansing of the body to keep one healthy.

(The writer is lecturer at Department of Kaya Chikitsa, Amrita School of Ayurveda, Vallikkavu.)

THE DOS & DON'TS OF SODHANA CHIKITSA

There are certain strict conditions a patient should follow after Sodhana Chikitsa. They include:

- Take adequate rest and avoid heavy work till one returns to normal health.
- Take care of body posture. Do not remain in the same posture of sitting or standing for long duration. Avoid irregular and difficult postures.
- Avoid direct exposure to sun light, rain and cold climate.
- Avoid exposure of chest or face to wind
- Do not stay awake at night.
- Do not bathe in cold water.
- Abstain from sex during the entire course of treatment.

This regimen is generally applicable for twice the number of days for which the patient was under treatment.

If one were to follow pathya, then there is no need of medicine. And if one does not follow the pathya, then there is no point taking medicines.

LET THERE BE SIGHT

Chronic eye diseases, as well as ordinary ailments, have effective treatment in Ayurveda

Pitha for vision
Ayurveda says Alochaka Pitha, one among the five types of Pitha, is responsible for vision. It has two distinctive components; one in the eye (Chakshurvaisheshika Alochaka Pitha) and other in the brain as optic centre (Buddhirvaisheshik Alochaka Pitha).

*Chkshurakshayaam sarva kaalam
manushya
yathna kartavyo jeevithe ya-
vathishcha
vridho lokayaam thulya rathri
diwanaam
pumsavandhanaam vidhya
mathepi vithaii*

(If a person cannot differentiate between day and night in spite of having wealth, his life will be rendered useless. Hence a person who desires to have a long life should always be conscious about the measures to prevent eye diseases.)

Ayurveda acharayas say 'netram pradhanam sakalendriyanam', that is, eyes are the most important of all the sense organs as they perceive forms, adorn the face

and are the source of direct knowledge and the guide to keep one away from wrong deeds.

According to Ayurveda, Alochaka Pitha, one among the five types of Pitha, is responsible for vision. It has two distinctive components; one in the eye itself (Chakshurvaisheshika Alochaka Pitha) and other in the brain as optic centre (Buddhirvaisheshik Alochaka Pitha).

Salakya Tantra

The branch of Ayurveda that deals with the etiology, diagnosis and management of diseases in parts of the body above the neck is called Salakya Tantra (or Urdhwanga as per Ashtanga Ayurveda). Ophthalmology in Ayurveda, thus, is part of a branch which also deals with ear, nose, throat, teeth, head

and neck. Shalaky Tantra talks about 76 eye diseases, 28 ear diseases and 31 nose diseases.

Etiology of eye disorders

Ayurveda defines certain conditions which upset the tridoshas and result in eye diseases. They are:

Ushnabhitaptasya Jalapraveshat
Dooreshanatswapnaviparyayat cha
Bashpagrahat Sook shma
Nirikshanat cha
Netre vikaran janayanti ghoran
(Su.Samtita / Uttar; Ch 26/4)

*Exposure of eyes to excess heat or cold; observing distant/minute objects for long periods; disturbed and improper sleep; exposure to long bouts of weeping, anger, sorrow and exertion; trauma and infections; regular use of black gram, horse gram and fermented drinks; exposure to smoke.

Eye in the eyes of Susruta

Susrutha Samhita has detailed descriptions of the anatomy and physiology of the eye. The classical Ayurveda text has pointed out that the shape of the eye is oblong and the thickness of the eyeball is close to the thickness of one's own thumb (swangushthdara sammitam). It has also mentioned the layers (patal), junctions (sandhi), pupil (drishti), inner canthus (kaninak), outer canthus (apanga), the lens, eyelids and eyelashes.

Diseases

Ashtangahridaya has detailed description, diagnosis and management of various common eye diseases such as anjanamaika (stye), laganam (chalazion) conjunctivitis and other inflammatory diseases (amloshitha and

abhishyanda), armam (pterygium), sra-va (epiphora and lacrimation), sukla roga (corneal opacity) and sushkakshipaka (dry eye).

Ashtangahridaya groups eye diseases according to the site in the eye where the disease is manifested. They are: 1. Varthma roga (lids) 2. Sandhi roga (canthus, limbus, etc.) 3. Sitha roga (sclera) 4. Asitha roga (cornea), 5. Drishti roga (refractive pathway up to retina and higher centres) 6. Sarvakshi roga (the whole of the eye).

Treatment

Ayurveda prescribes both surgical and medical treatment for eye diseases. Surgical management includes procedures like chedana (excision), bhedana (incision and drainage), lekhana (scraping), kuttana (pricking), agnikarma and kshara karma (cauterisation).

In medical management, along with the internal use of Ayurvedic herbal preparations, special forms of ocular therapies are put to use. They include samsodhara (cleansing process which includes kayarechana, sireorchana and rechananjana), samsamana (curative and palliative measures) and nirhana parivarjana (preventive treatments).

Samana

The Samana Chikista, or curative therapy, is found to be effective in managing most eye diseases. It employs several treatment processes such as kashayadhara, tarpana, nasyam, shashtika sweda, netradhara, putapaka, anjanam, purampada, sirodhara, sirovasti and aschyothana.

Kashayadhara, with its cleans-



Susrutha, the surgeon

Susruta, the 6th century BC Ayurveda surgeon, is known to have conducted surgery for cataract using a special tool called Jabamukhi Salaka, a curved needle used to loosen the lens and push the cataract out of the field of vision. The eye would later be soaked with warm butter and bandaged. Salakya Tantra evolved from Salaka.

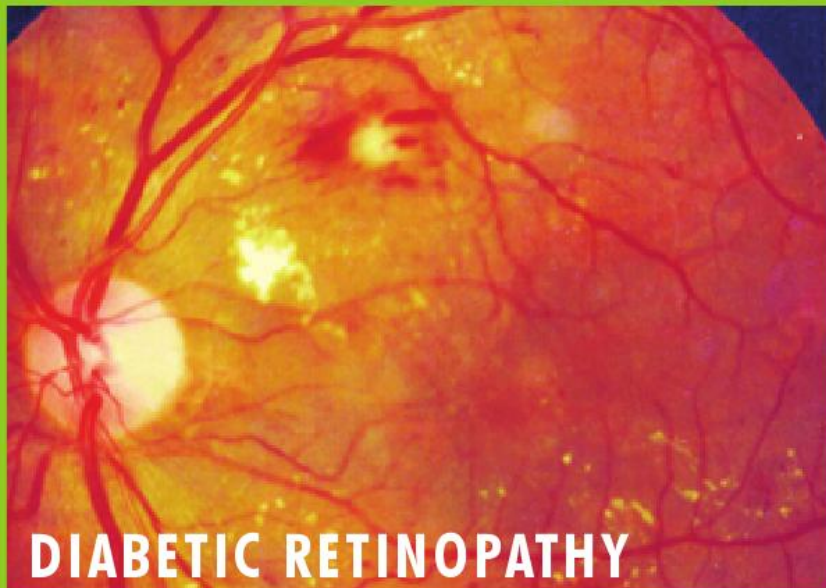
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DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Retina is the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye, necessary for good vision. Diabetic retinopathy is a common diabetic eye disease which can lead to blindness. Patients with a history of diabetes for more than 10 years are more susceptible to this disease. It is caused by changes in the blood vessels of the retina: in some patients the blood vessels may have swollen and leaked fluid while in others, abnormal new blood vessels may have grown on the surface of the retina.

Ayurveda treats this as part of the management of diabetes, which essentially distorts the body's ability to treat fat, the basic building block in the body. Diabetes affects different parts of the body such as the heart and the eye in different forms.

In the case of DR, the fat deposit in the blood cells in the retina blocks blood circulation, starving the cells of nutrition. This can lead to two types of situations: one, background retinopathy, where the retina's blood supply decreases, affecting vision. The second is proliferative retinopathy, in which the body

creates new blood vessels. These new vessels are weak and are highly susceptible to rupture, blocking vision.

Pacifying the vitiated Pitha is the first process when we begin treating eye diseases. Due to vitiated Pitha bleeding occurs. By various treatments like tarpanam, nasyam, takradhara and netra dhara, Ayurveda effectively prevents the growth of degenerated cells, reverses metabolic changes manifested in chronic diabetes, stops bleeding and chances of reoccurrence and thus improves the quality of vision.

Ayurveda treatment attempts to restore the efficiency of the original blood vessels by clearing them of fat. This will also obviate the creation of new blood vessels. For this, the priority is to bring diabetes under control. Once diabetes is regulated, then treatment begins for the removal of the fat in the blood cells and their strengthening. The treatment involves both intake of medicine well as external application. Treatment depends on the nature of the patient and the stage at which the disease is.

Besides, medicines like Vasaguluchyadi Kashayam, Vidaryadi Kashayam, Sheethajwarari Kashayam, etc., will be given at the time of treatment. Depending upon the constitution of the patient, suitable medicines will be prescribed after the course of treatment.

ing property, marks the beginning of treatment in many diseases. Here, specified herbal decoctions are poured into the eyes from a specific height for a specific period.

Tarpanam is about placing medicated ghee over the eyeballs using a border made with black gram powder for a specific period. It improves the vision and is very useful for the treatment of diseases such as myopia. It is also effective for children's eye diseases.

Nasya, or, instilling medicated oil by drops into both nostrils, is done to clean up the passage and to nourish the organs and improve the nervous system.

Netradhara involves pouring of herbal decoction through the inner

corners of the eyes and let to flow through the whole eye. The process is repeated for both eyes. A cleansing treatment, **Netradhara** is generally done prior to other treatments.

Shashtika sweda is performed by



Netradhara

massaging closed eyes with a poultice made of herbal milk decoction paste for a prescribed time and under controlled pressure. **Shashtika sweda** is effective in cases with high astigmatism and weak and for people with small eye balls.

The eye disease for which Ayurveda offers effective treatment are:

Diabetic retinopathy, a common diabetic eye disease affecting the retina of the eye, can lead to blindness (see box).

Retinitis Pigmentosa, which is a group of inherited eye diseases that cause degeneration of photoreceptor cells in the retina, results in progressive vision loss.

Macular degeneration, or age-related macular degeneration (ARMD),

is a leading cause of vision loss at the age of 60 and above, which destroys the sharp, central vision.

Glaucoma, caused by increased intraocular pressure (IOP) resulting either from a malformation or malfunction of the eye's drainage structures. Left untreated, an elevated IOP causes irreversible damage to the optic nerve and retinal fibres, resulting in a progressive, permanent loss of vision.

Retinal Detachment, a serious and sight-threatening event, occurs when the retina becomes separated from its underlying supportive tissue. The retina cannot function when these layers are detached, and unless it is reattached soon, permanent vision loss may result. Its early symptoms include spots, floaters and flashes of light. Vision might become blurry.



Keratoconus: Often appearing in the teens or early twenties, Keratoconus is a progressive disease in which the normally round cornea thins and begins to bulge into a cone-like shape. This cone shape deflects light as it enters the eye on its way to the light-sensitive retina, causing distorted vision.

Myopic Degeneration: Degenerative myopia is the seventh leading cause of blindness. This condition can start at birth, but most often starts during the pre-teen years. It is believed to be hereditary.

Hyperaemia Retinae is caused by the congestion of blood in the retina. Normally, in the retina, the size of arteries is 3/4th that of veins. If there is any congestion of blood, the size of the veins and arteries change.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Apart from maintaining a balanced diet and lifestyle, the proper use of ghee, wheat, milk, etc., nourishes the eye. Eating grapes and leafy vegetables can prevent many ailments. Regular use of **Thriphala** is very helpful in preventing old age eye problems.

Eye in our times

Proper rest and exercise are the key to the health of the eyes. Sleeping in a well-lit area gives no rest to the eyes. "Though we close our eyes, the retina will be working. So, it won't get proper rest," said Dr M Prasad, chief physician, Sunethri Ayurveda Hospital, Thrissur. Apart from lifestyle disorders, hereditary and traumatic conditions can trigger eye diseases. "If patients follow the physician's instructions fully in terms of diet and medicine, they can get definite relief in most eye diseases related to lifestyle," he said.

There are things which are attendant to modern living. Near vision is one such thing. "We live in closed environments such as apartments, where our eyes don't have to see things beyond a distance," Dr Prasad said. Laptops are more harmful than desktops because "we keep our eyes closer to the screen". It will affect the blinking of the eyes, and they will start drying up. Blinking spreads the tears over the eyeball and keeps it wet and cool always.

THERE IS HOPE

Dr M Prasad

A middle aged man with chronic diabetes walked into my consultation room with a defective vision in his left eye. I was not the first doctor he was consulting: he had been to a leading allopathic hospital where the ophthalmologist had diagnosed his diseases as proliferative diabetic retinopathy. They had suggested prophylactic laser in his right eye and indicate that left eye was in

a very bad condition, and was beyond redemption. The treatment, however, worsened his condition, as he started losing vision in the right eye as well.

The situation was indeed bad: there was detachment of retina in the left eye and the sugar level looked beyond control. To start with, I prescribed him *mrudveekadi sekam*, *daryadi aschyothanam* and *nisakathakadi kashayam*. The results were excellent. He reported

ed significant improvement in vision. He can now see better and feels comfortable with the progress now.

Diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, diabetic retinopathy and myopic retinopathy are tough to cure completely. But if treated properly and promptly, the vision can be restored to some extent.

With inputs from N P P Namboodiri, chief physician and managing director, Sreedhareeyam Ayurvedic Eye Hospital, Dr B G Gokullan, chief physician, Sudarshanam Netra Chikitsalayam, Dr Bijumon O C, lecturer, Pariyaram Medical College.

PACIFYING VATA

Treatment should address the issue of proper metabolism

Auto immune diseases

The human body develops autoimmune diseases when it is attacked by its own immune system: that is, when the cells and antibodies of the immune system, designed to seek and destroy invaders of the body, target their own body tissues. When the immune system is attacked, it can affect multiple organs of the body.

Ayurveda counts autoimmune diseases, which include the dreaded rheumatoid arthritis, among those diseases which have their origin in vitiated Vata. Once set in, these diseases will subject the patient to severe pain, inflammation, stiffness and even deformity of the joints for life.

Vata shows all the properties of air such as force, vacuum, dryness, cold, lightness, wind and dehydration. It is active in bodily movements: contraction and relaxation of muscles, breathing and internal transportation and flow of body materials such as blood, lymph, sweat, urine, nutrients and other fluids.

Five types of Vata

Vata dosha, which generates Vata energy for all other body parts is divided into five types called vayus (air or wind). They are prana, apana, vyana, udana and samana.

Prana vayu functions mainly in the head, neck and chest regions and acts from the atmosphere to the inside of the body. It carries out functions of the sensory organs in the head and acts as a receptor of all external stimuli. Udana vayu, also located in the head, neck and chest, acts opposite of prana vayu. Its direction is upward and outward, enabling the body to vomit, spit and throw off substances such as carbon



dioxide and water during expiration. Vyana vayu functions at the chest and the heart region. It acts like a pacemaker, controlling the activity of the heart and initiates actions and movements everywhere in the body. It is responsible for circulation of substances in the body to activate muscular movements and mental activities. Samana vayu is present in the area of the abdomen. Its main function is to ignite the digestive fire and activate the process of digestion by creating peristalsis in intestinal movements. It also helps in the separation and absorption of digested food and carries excretory wastes to the large intestine. Apana vayu is located in the pelvic region. Its functions are

seen in the excretory organs for defecation, in the kidneys and urinary systems and in the area of reproductive organs. It activates and mobilises sperm, enables performance of sexual activities, ovulation and menstruation.

So, once Vata gets disturbed it will affect the whole body seriously.

Rheumatism

Rheumatism or amavata in Ayurveda can be identified by symptoms such as severe pain and swelling in the muscles, joints, tendons and ligaments. According to classical texts of Ayurveda, muscle pain and joint pains are a result of increase in toxins (ama) in the joints and aggravation of Vata. Ama means an item which is not ripened, cooked



and digested or metabolised properly. When improper digestion takes place, this ama combines with Vata (which decides all kinds of movements in the body). Wherever Vata finds closed channels, it leaves the ama there, which causes different kinds of diseases. When ama gets deposited in the joints, it leads to aggravation of Vata and results in inflammation of muscles causing intense pain.

Rheumatoid arthritis, or Sandhi Vata, is a common rheumatic disease, afflicting people of all races. The disease can begin at any age, but it most often starts after age 40 and before 60. Research has found genetic factors as a major cause of this disease and that

women are affected more often than men.

Metabolism, in Ayurveda, is referred to as *deepana-pachana* (*deepana*: the process of breaking down of food materials into its parts; *pachana* is their absorption by the body). Undigested food contaminates the blood, and later the body and vitiates Vata, the nervous force of activity. So, rheumatoid arthritis is a metabolic disease which prevents the proper movement of the limbs either on account of pain, swelling or stiffness.

Causes

Accumulation of ama (toxins) in the joints, formed due to improper digestion, metabolism or excretion.

Aggravated Vata by exposure to cold weather.

Genetic factors

Symptoms

Sleeplessness

Anemia

Pain and swelling in the affected parts

Constipation

Structural deformities in affected joints, mostly the fingers

Foul smell in stools and fart

Fever

Immense pain & stiffness in affected muscles, specially stiffness and pain in fingers, wrists, elbows, knees, ankles in the morning.

Treatment

Depending on the nature and stage of the disease, treatment for rheumatoid arthritis may be carried out in phases. It is more difficult to treat patients with Vata constitution compared to those with Pitha or Kapha constitutions.

The first phase of the treatment comprises of internal medication with medicines having *deepana* and *pachana* properties. This helps correct di-

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gestion and metabolism. Local *sweda kriyas* (sudation therapy) are applied on joints for reducing pain and inflammation. These measures also help improve digestion.

When the digestion is improved, the treatment may be switched over to *samana chikitsa* or pacification therapy with oral administration of analgesic and anti-inflammatory medicines and external therapies like *Dravaswedam* (Dhara), *Pindaswedam* (Kizhi), *Upa-naham* (poultice).

In the second phase, treatment for immune modulation starts along with the continuation of pacification therapy. This includes *Snehana* (oleation therapy-internal or external administration of oil, ghee, etc.) combined



IN SEARCH OF PROGENY

Ensure a healthy sperm, healthy ovum
and healthy uterus

Infertility is a condition in which a couple, after one year of unprotected intercourse, does not produce an offspring.

Ayurveda view

Vrushya chikitsa, or treatment for infertility and related diseases, is one among the eight clinical branches of Ashtanga Ayurveda.

According to the classical texts of Ayurveda, a healthy sperm, healthy ovum and a healthy uterus are necessary for conception. Besides, the health of shukra dhatu (reproductive tissue) is significant as it determines the reproductive energy of both men and women. Shukra

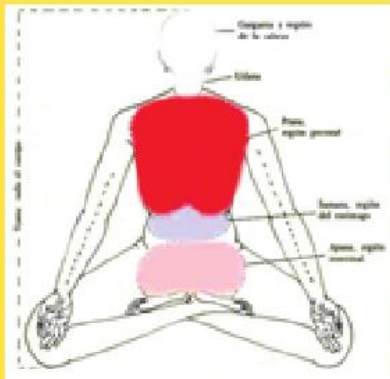
dhatu is responsible for the creation of ovum and sperm.

Ayurveda suggests that apana vayu, or the downward descending energy, is responsible for the body activities in the pelvic region. If and when the smooth passage of apana vayu is blocked, it will affect the activities of the organs in the region, including those in the reproductive system.

The proper functioning of shukra dhatu and apana vaayu ensure the

Apana vayu

Benefactor and villain



Apana vayu is one among the five vayus which control the activities of the human body. The other vayus are udana vayu in the head region, prana vayu in the chest region, samana vayu in the abdominal region and vyana vayu in the legs and arms, the skeleton, muscles and joints. Apana vayu, responsible for exhalation, elimination and reproductive organs, centres in the pelvic region and its responsibilities include ejaculation of semen, menstrual discharge, delivery of the fetus, and passage of urine and stools. It also supports the other four vayus.

Obstruction to apana vayu manifests as different disorders of the organs in the pelvic region. They include haemorrhoids, urological complaints, certain forms of diabetes and gynecological and reproductive malfunctioning. Obstruction to the apana vayu is attributed mainly due to uncontrolled and over-eating, working for long hours in the sitting position, control of urges such as defecation and urination.

Vasti or enema is the main treatment which pacifies apana vayu and clears the obstructions. Food which is hot in nature, such as sesame, are supposed to be good in the pacification of apana vayu.

Once apana vayu is pacified, the system is examined for determining what prevents the regular functioning of the reproductive system, and treatment decided.

proper functioning of the reproductive system and ensure all the four conditions—ritu (proper ovulation and healthy permeation), kshethram (pure and favourable uterine atmosphere), ambu (proper nourishment and blood circulation) and beejam (healthy zygote) for conception. Impairment of any one of the above factors can cause infertility.

Female infertility

Based on the tridosha theory, the menstrual cycle can be divided into three phases: the Kapha phase, which is between the end of menstrual bleeding and the beginning of ovulation marked by an increase in oestrogen; the Pitha phase, which refers to the phase between ovulation until the menstrual period begins and is marked by high progesterone hormone levels and the Vata phase, which is the period of menstrual bleeding in which the menstrum is pushed downward by apana vayu and empties the contents of the womb. Normal menses is considered to be on a 26-30 day cycle, of moderate flow and colour with no clots and pain.

“Vathathirogan kunupagrathipooya ksheena malahyam beejasamartham rethosam...”

(Ashtanga Hridayam, Grabha Kranti, Sareera Sathanam, 10th Sloka)

This sloka says that infertility can be identified by observing the following factors: state of the tridoshas, menstrual problems and weakness of the body. They can be manifested as artava dosha (unhealthy ovum, menstrual disorders), yoni roga (disorder of uterus, vagina, ovaries), artavavaha srotas abhigata (malfunctioning of channels carrying ovum) and endocrine disorders.

The common disorders of the system which results in female infertility are: polycystic ovary, fibroids in the uterus, endometriosis, anovulation, premature ovarian failure and hormone imbalances. The condition in which a woman can't conceive permanently is known as vandhya and when there is a possibility to conceive after treatment, it is called avandhya.

Treatment

There are three stages of treatment for infertility which is also known as Pumsavana Chikitsa. It has three processes: cleansing the entire body using kashayam, arishtam and lehyams, balancing the menstrual cycle and pumasavanam which includes snehapanam, swedanam, virechanam and

uttaravasthi. These treatments also strengthen the shukra dhatu.

Traditional sodhana treatments including vasti are done to pacify and clear the passage of apana vayu. Treatment for the correction or regulation of the proper menstrual cycle through dipana, pachana, annulomana and snehapana is also done. Bramhana rasyana treatment is also done in certain conditions.

Ayurveda defines cyst as a formation of vata and kapha, and so, in case of polycystic ovary, treatment will be done to bring down the cysts. Once this is done, fertilisation becomes possible.

The choice of the treatment and its duration will be decided based on the condition of the patient. Ayurveda physicians suggest that treatment of infertility is a time-consuming process.

Male infertility

There are two types of male infertility. First, maturation rest where the sperm is neutralised and second, the no-sperm condition. The treatment for the second is a difficult task. In certain patients, low sperm count, reduced sperm motility and malformed sperms are also noticed. The other

What is due to God...

God cures the disease while the physician charges the fees, goes the saying. Several patients turn to god when they exhaust all medical avenues. What does Ayurveda say on this with respect to infertility, especially when studies show that up to 20 per cent of infertility is unexplainable? Daivavya-pasraya (performing pujas & offerings to god) is one among the three treatment regimes in Ayurveda, the others being Yukti pipasha, or logical treatment which most medical branches including Ayurveda follow, and Satyavajja, or counselling. "My experience tells me it makes sense," says Dr Devan Namboothiri, chief physician, Ayurveda Mana. "In some cases, the results have been wonderful."

conditions are bijadusti (disorder of seminal fluid and sperm), shukra dosha (distortion of the shukra datu), klaibya (impotency) and psychological factors. Any one or a combination of all these can result in unhealthy sperm and non-availability of sperm for fertilisation.

Treatment

The main objective is to correct spermatogenesis and produce healthy sperm. Apart from dipana, pachana, anulomana, snehapana and shodana, vajikarana/brahmana chikitsa are done to improve the quality of sperm.

The drugs from the category of vrsya-shukra jananam, shukra shodhana, shukra visarjana are used to produce sperm, ensure its purification and its ejection, respectively.

Vajikarana Chikitsa is done to maintain sexual activity and keep the number of healthy sperms at the desired level. This also helps to increase the quantity of semen and sperm motility.

For people with other diseases such as piles, tuberculosis and diabetes, the treatment begins only after curing them.

What the patient must do

Result for the treatment of infertility, like many other disorders, depends a lot on the cooperation of the patient. There should be discipline in the dietary as well as working practices.

Since infertility is closely linked to the disruption of apana vayu, patients are advised not to do things that would further aggravate apana vayu such as sitting for long hours, with holding the urges such as those for defecation and urination.

Infertility deals with shukra dhatu, which is the last of the five dhatus. This means that for a vibrant antya dhatu (final dhatu), all the others should also be clear and good. This means that one should take extreme care about food and the body metabolism. If the digestive systems leave toxins behind, then it could affect the shukra dhatu. Medicines alone may not be able to set it right.

■ Ensure proper rest for the body. A very fast lifestyle can hamper the treatment of infertility.

■ Eating junk food will vitiate the body metabolism and adversely affect the reproductive organs such as fallopian tube, uterus and ovary. Avoid eating chocolate biscuits, coffee and tea.

■ Avoid long drives on two-wheelers.

■ Avoid alcohol, as its consumption could increase the number of defective sperms.

■ Do not smoke. Smoking can result in low sperm count, poor sperm motility, and abnormal sperm.

Hospitals

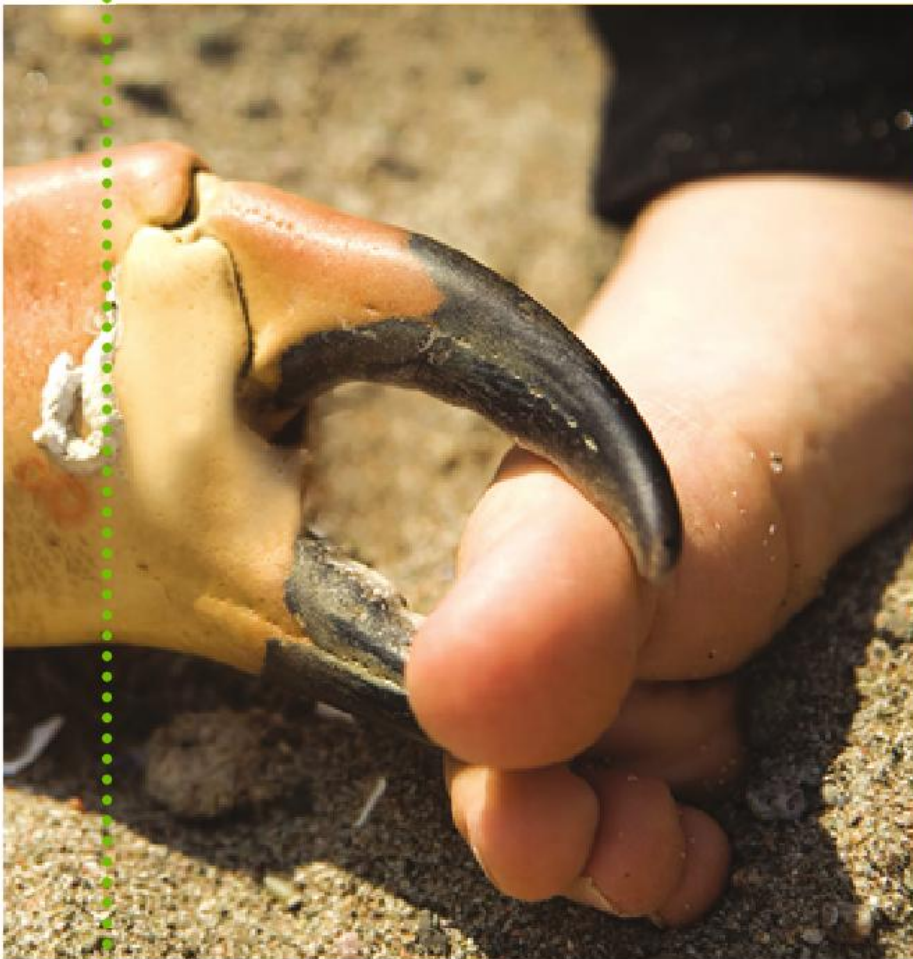
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According ayurveda, Rakta dhatu or blood is formed when rasa (lymph) mixes with ranjaka pitha (haemoglobin).

"Raktam varna prasaadanam mamsa pushtim jeevayathicha" Rakta enhances complexion and tone of skin. It strengthens and nourishes mamsa dhatu (Muscles). The whole physiology of body is dependent on this tissue.

Diseases caused by Vitiating of Rakta or blood

"Raktam visarpa pleeha vidradheen kushta vaatasra pittasra gulmopa kusa kaamala vyangaagni naasha"

TAKING ON THE CRAB

It's like a crab. There is treatment to make it leave the body even if it catches you.

Cancer is like a crab. Once it catches you, it will drive its fangs into you and will remain there, refusing to budge. Cancerous cells, or malignant growth, develop when some cells go mad and display uncontrolled growth, invade adjacent tissues, and sometimes spread to other locations in the body via lymph or blood (metastasis). Most cancers form a tumor but some, like leukemia, do not. The benign growth would not exhibit any of these characteristics.

In Ayurveda, the benign growth is referred to as grandhi and malignant

tumor as arbuda. Classical Ayurveda texts say 'arb himsane arbadi ithi arbuda' (what kills fast is known as arbuda). Both arbuda and grandhi occur mainly due to the formation of rodham (obstruction) and ama (toxins) which create impure blood.

According classical Ayurveda, the human body consists of seven dhatus (tissues): rasa (lymph), rakta (blood), maamsa (muscles), medas (fat or adipose tissue), asthi (bone), majja (bone marrow) and shukra (sex hormones). When one of these dhatus (tissue) weakens it will affect the remaining



sammoha raktatwam netra
mootrata
Visarpa - herpes
Vidradhi - abscess
Kushta - skin disorders like acne,
pimples, psoriasis, etc
vata rakta - gout
Rakta pitta - hemorrhagic
disorders
Gulma - tumours
Kamala - jaundice
Vyanga - pigmentation of skin
Agni nasha - indigestion
Sammoha - syncope
Raktatwaknetra mootrata - Redness
of eyes, skin and urine

dhatus and the whole body.

Etiology of grandhi

“Grad bandhane (himsayam) gradayadi.

‘Grand bandane grandayadi’
(Sabdakalpadruma)

The sloka says Grandi is a thing which binds together or stick together, coagulated and thickly clogged with knocking lumps.

Grandhi means viseshena gradidam sophra or an elevated round shaped hard swelling mass.

Etiology of arbuda

“Aram bundadi ithi arbuda
Arb thasmi udedi ithi arbuda
Aram ange rathangsyas seeghra
seeghra gayo rapi”
(Sabdakalpadruma)

The sloka says Arbuda is a disease which kills a person fastly and it rapidly spreads to the body like a wheel of chariot.

THE BELIEVED CAUSATIVE FACTORS

Genetic
Hormonal
Physical stress
Tobacco
Alcohol
Diet (eg. Fast food)
Industrial pollution
Chronic immuno suppressive
treatments
Geographical factors
Classification

While classical texts talk of six types of arbuda— vatarbuda, pitharbuda, kapharbuda, raktarbuda, mamsarbuda and medharbuda—Sushruta mentions one more, ie kshudraroga, as sharkara-rbuda. While describing prognosis of arbuda, Sushruta mentioned two more states of this as – adhyarbuda and dvi-rarbuda.

These two are a state of metastasis. In adhyarbuda case, there is a chance of another arbuda after one. While, in dvi-rarbuda, there will be two or more arbudas in other parts of the body.

Characteristics

The imbalance in tridoshas will invade the muscles and blood and produce round shape (vrittam), fixed to the surrounding tissues (sthiram), slightly painful (manda rujam), large in size (mahantham), infiltrates to nearby tissues (analpamoolam), slowly increasing (chira vrudhi) and non-suppurating apakam.

Treatments

Ayurveda aims at (1) reducing the tumor size (2) preventing or stopping the spread of tumor cells via the blood and lymph ducts and (3) treating the affected tissues.

This method is done by applying methods such as swednam and vi-rechanam. The scientific say is to liquefy, soften and uproot the affected tissues.

“I have found that patients who took to Ayurveda after the first phase of treatment under modern medicine, such as chemotherapy, have benefitted. After the first chemo, a lot of cancerous cells would have died. But after the first course, its impact becomes less,

CANCER

King Shantanu was afflicted with a type of cancer (Pundrika Arbuda) and the smell emanated from his body attracted snakes. The then skilled Vaidyans declared that Kasturi is the best remedy. Blessed by the sage Parasara, the maiden's body produced Kasturi. Surprising all, the king got cured.

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Historians say the word Cancer originated from Carcinus which means crab in Greek and Latin. It was Hippocrates, the father of Greek medicine, who used the word 'crab' first to describe malignant tumors. It happened when he saw the cut surface of a breast cancer. He described it as 'carcinus' which looked like a crab with legs stretching outwards. Later, Hippocrates coined the word carcinoma as crab swelling. The Roman physician Celsus translated the word Crab into Latin. Thus, the name 'cancer' that we use now became the common.

and its side-effects would increase. At this stage, the patient should look for alternatives. An integrated system of treatment would be strong enough to kill the roots of arbuda," says Dr Sahadevan.

Dr Sudhikumar also echoed the same view. "We have to embrace new diagnosis treatments like histopathological studies like ultra sound sonogram, CT scan, MRI as we can easily detect where the problem is and start treatment."

Swedana and raktamoksha are prescribed for Vatarbuda patients while mridu sweda, virechana, lekhanam, rektamoksha and snehapana are effective for pitharbuda. Vamana, rektamoksha, teekshna lepana, lekhanam and agnikarma are prescribed for Kapha. In meda conditions, swedana, sastrakarma, (complete removal is a must to avoid recurrence.)

DIETARY GUIDELINES

Eat fresh green vegetables.
Maintain ideal weight.
Avoid too much fat.
Eat adequate starch.
Avoid alcohol and smoking.
Reduce stress.

THE TOUGH PATCH

Psoriasis is a chronic skin disease characterised by flaking, redness and inflammation of the skin



Ayurveda puts psoriasis among the diseases that come under the group 'kushtam'. One key aspect of this group of diseases is that it affects the skin and its beauty. Psoriasis is one among 18 types of kushtam and is termed as *eka-kushtam*.

The term 'psoriasis' comes from the Greek word 'psora', which means 'itch'. An inflammatory skin disorder, psoriasis produces redness in thickened areas of the skin with silvery scales, most often on the scalp, elbows, knees, and lower back. Some patients are afflicted with these symptoms on their entire body. It is not a contagious or an infectious disease but, there are chances of occurrence due to genetic transmission.

Ayurveda suggests psoriasis develops due to vitiation of Vata and Kapha. People who have psoriasis get a related form of arthritis called "psoriatic arthritis," which causes inflammation of the joints. Psoriasis is classified based on the part of the body where it is seen, or its nature. There are plaque psoriasis, guttate

psoriasis, pustular psoriasis, palmar/plantar psoriasis, nail psoriasis, erythrodermic psoriasis, etc.

Symptoms

Most common symptoms of psoriasis are red patches of skin topped with silvery scales, usually on the knees, elbows and scalp. Minute bleeding spots may be seen on forceful removal of scales.

Causes

There are no definite causes which can trigger the development of psoriasis, but doctors suggest one or a combination of factors can cause this disease. These factors include:

- Drinking very cold water/beverages when the body is warm.
- Consuming incompatible food items.
- Taking up heavy physical activities when the stomach is full.
- Mental stress and strain, job pressures, anxiety and depression.
- Hereditary factors.

"Ayurveda stresses on the mind's role in this disease," says Dr C K Krishnan Nair, Professor, Department of Agathatantra, Government Ayurveda College, Thripunithura, a well known specialist

in this disease. He quotes from Ashtanga Hrudayam (Nidana Sthanam, Kusta nidanam):

Mithyaha viharena visseshena virodhina

Sadhu ninda vadhanyaswahanandyeicha sevithe

Papmabhi karmabhi: sadya prakthaneir veeritha: mala:

The sloka explains that skin problems can develop even due to the sins we commit. And it could start from the telling of simple lies!

"It is a tough job to treat hereditary psoriasis. In normal cases, patients get a symptomatic relief approximately in one and a half months of treatment, but hereditary cases will take many months," says Dr Krishnan Nair.

Tame it:

Go for vegetarian food

Avoid yogurt, chillies, black gram and excess salt

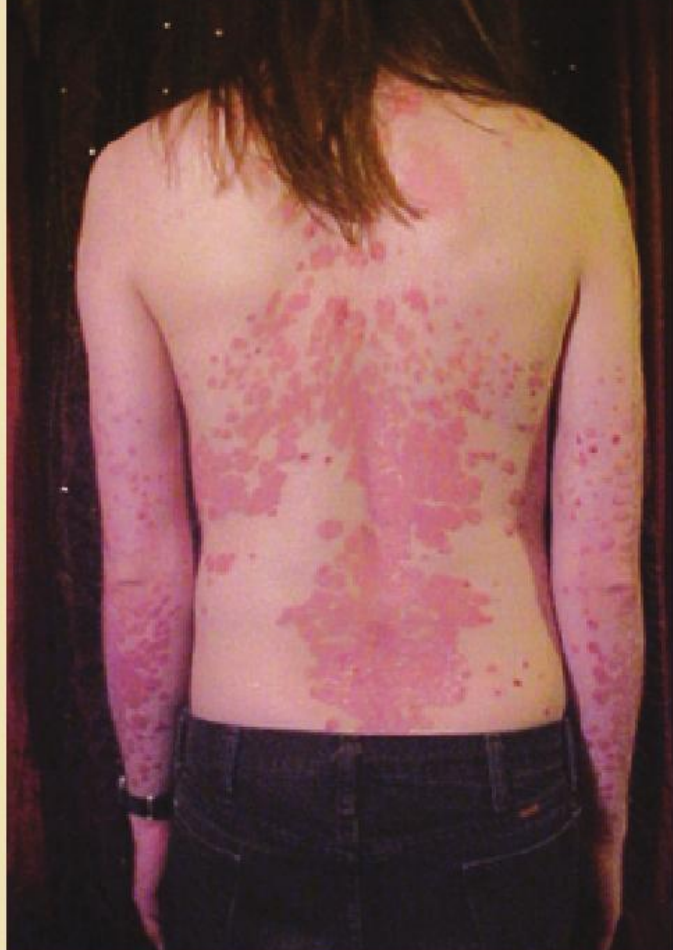
Avoid refrigerated and cold foods

Treatment

The treatment procedure starts with Snehapanam after observing the digestive power. Then, mild swedanam is done by bathing in hot water. In normal skin diseases, it is not prescribed. Here it is done as this is caused due to vitiation of Vata and Kapha. By doing this, all the waste materials accumulated in the body reaches the 'Koshta'. Then sodhana (vamanam and virechanam) and Samana Chikitsa are done.

Rasayana therapy is preferred as the last part of the treatment as it has the power to prolong the time of reoccurrence. "Rasayana therapy can do wonders. In several cases, patients who did it could escape from its reoccurrence for long periods," says Dr. Krishnan Nair. "But, often most of the patients skip this process citing several reasons."

Though psoriasis is not contagious, chances of reoccurrence are high, if a patient doesn't follow a strict lifestyle.



END TO AN ORDEAL

Dr Ananth Ram Sharma P V
Dr Prathibha C K

The patient nine years ago noticed two small elevated skin spots similar to a mosquito bite on his back with a small scaling. Initially, he applied some skin ointments but it was in vain. Later, he consulted an allopathic doctor and the latter prescribed an ointment which healed the lesion completely. He used the same ointment for the next lesions also. When he came to know that the ointment was a steroid he stopped using it.

Though he consulted several doctors of different systems of medicine he didn't get relief from the pain. The disease spread to the whole body and the eruptions aggravated. And it made this difficult for the Karate student to attend classes and competitions.

Treatment

The patient came to the hospital in a serious condition. Skin scaling was seen in the whole body and head with edema over the limbs and face. Skin color was blackish and there were watery secretions which wet his shirt and trousers within hours. Besides, occasionally he had bleeding from the scaly lesions. He also felt too much body heat. At that time he bathed daily at least for two hours with cold water. His eyebrows had almost fallen off and there was heavy hair loss from the moustache and head.

His appetite was good but he complained of constipation. The sleep was disturbed while micturition was free.

Skin examination

Colour – Blackish red throughout the body (comparatively fair before 5 years)

Lesion: Scaling+++,

Skin eruptions ++

Extension: whole body

Secretion: watery, bloody on squeezing the earlobe

Auspitz Sign: positive

Candle grease sign: positive

Admission 1 – December 2007

The patient was admitted to the hospital in a bad condition with the above symptoms. We initially prescribed samana aushadhi followed by Kriyakramas. The following medicines were prescribed for internal consumption:

- Madhusnuhi Rasayanam at bed time

- Aragwadhadi Kashayam (fresh) 30ml at 6am and 6pm

- Triphala Annabhedi Tab 2 tid A/F

- Nimba Kalka 15gms at 8am

Kriyakrama

- Pinda taila + Jeevanthyadi Yamakam application on whole body followed by Bhashpapa Sweda (20 min)

- Tiktaka Ghrita application after bath

- Takradhara (Haridra + Aragwadhadi Kashaya) for 14 days

- Jalaukavacharana 8 sittings on alternate days

Edema almost reduced in 20 days of treatment and agni vridhhi was found. So he was posted for Sodhana Karma.

- Arohana Snehapana with Guggulu tiktaka Ghritam

- Abhyanga with pinda taila + Jeevanthyadi Yamakam followed by Sweda

- Vamana with Madaphala Yoga – Madhyama Shuddhi

- Peyadi Samsarjana Krama for five days Discharged with following medication

- Madhusnuhi Rasayanam at bed time

- Aragwadhadi Kashayam (fresh) 30ml at 6am and 6pm

- Tab Histantin 2 tid A/F

- Pinda taila + Jeevanthyadi Yamakam application before bath

- Tiktaka Ghrita application after bath



Diet: Avoid black gram, fish, bakery items, fried items, day time nape, cold air exposure

Admission 2 (March 2008)

The patient reported reduced scaling on the body. There were occasional watery secretions but bleeding had stopped. Itching and pain had come down. Slight colour change was observed in dorsal part of feet.

Treatment

- Arohana Snehapana – Aragwadha Mhatiktakam Ghritam
- Abhyanga with pinda taila followed by sweda
- Vamana with Madana Phala Yoga – Pravara Shuddhi
- Peyadi samsarjana Krama for 7 days

Discharge Medicine: same as above, along with Amritha Bhallathaka Rasayana for two months.

During his third visit in June 2008, the patient was feeling almost 40 per cent improvement in his condition with occasional itching and scaling. There was no discharge from the skin and the general health had improved vastly. The patient needed treatment only as an outpatient. A Siravyadha was performed in which approximately 150ml of blood was removed.

In his fourth visit in July 2008, he reported slight change in the colour with no scaling. There was occasional itching sensation. He also noticed the growth of scalp hair and eye brows. The following treatments were advised to him.

- Arohana Snehapana – Indukantha

Ghritham

- Abhyanga with pinda taila followed by sweda
- Virechana with Trivruth Yoga – Avara Shuddhi
- Peyadi samsarjana Krama for 3 days

Discharge Medicines

- Dineshavalyadi Keram for external application
- Nimbadi Kashayam 15ml at 6am and 6pm
- Manjistadi Kashayam 15ml at 6am and 6pm
- Swarna Vanga 1 tab Bid A/F
- Triphala Annabhedi Tab 2 tid A/F
- Pathya food articles twice daily
- Regular Yoga
- Sadhyo Virechana – Trivruth lehya once in a week

In the next visit, he reported the following:

- No Scaling
- No itching, pain or burning sensation
- No skin discharge
- Good sleep and appetite
- Skin colour of face: fair; abdomen and back: whitish brown; upper limb: brownish; lower limb: brownish; hands and feet: fair

Treatment

- Snehapanam with Indukantham Gritham
- Vamanam with Madana Yoga
- Jalaukavacharanam 3 sittings
- Bhallathaka Rasayana Prayogam
- Yoga

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THE MEDICINAL THREAD

Kashara Sutra is a minimally invasive para-surgical treatment for fistula with 98 per cent success



Fistula-in-ano is a disease that occurs in the ano-rectal area of the body. It is an inflammatory track with internal opening in the anal canal and opening in the perianal skin. The discharged pus opens in peri-anal area showing fistulous opening.

The main symptoms include recurrent swelling with pain, discomfort and discharge of pus in the peri-anal region. The others are tender abscess which bursts out to purulent bloody discharge, pain during and after defecation and possible fever.

The general causes are constipation, trauma, infected haemorrhoids, inflammatory bowel disease, inadequate proctologic managements, sexual perversion and extensive E. coli infection of the anal canal tear.

Fistulotomy, fistulectomy, and staged Sphincterotomy, are available standard proctological operations done under general or regional anesthesia. Fistulectomy with primary closure of the wound has some success in low anal and sub-cutaneous varieties but in deeper fistulae it has limited value because the primary closure of the wound often results in collection of the tissue fluid inside, giving rise to a secondary abscess formation and a recurrent fistula.

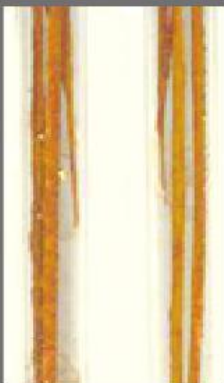
Healing is a concern as fistula occurs due to fecal contamination and presence of unhealthy granulation tissue. More case of recurrences occurs due to the peculiarity of anatomy and physiology of the region. Due to delay in wound healing and recurrence, patients are psychologically handicapped.

The Ayurvedic view

Ayurveda refers to fistula-in-ano as Bhagandra. Bhagandra, a tubular communication formed between anal canal and external surface of the skin is the Ayurvedic synonym of this disorder. The cause of this tube is vitiation of the apana vayu, responsible for the equilibrium of the tri-dosha of the pelvic region.

Susruta, father of surgery, has classified Bhagandra into five types. Vagbhata has contributed three more varieties.





THE MAKING OF KSHARA SUTRA

Kshara Sutra is an Ayurvedic device for management of fistula. It is a surgical thread, prepared by impregnating surgical linen size 20 repeatedly with three herbs: a. the latex of *Euphorbia neriifolia*, collected by stabbing the stem of the plant, b. a powder obtained by the evaporation of the filtered solution of burnt ashes of *Achyranthes aspera* in water



Achyranthes aspera



Euphorbia neriifolia



Turmeric

WHY KASHARA SUTRA

Safe with no side effects
Can be practiced on patients with cardiac, respiratory or endocrine problems
Cost effective
Performed in minor O.T. settings

No damage to anal sphincter, chances of incontinence is practically nil
Only local/topical anesthesia required
No antibiotic coverage required (usually)
Minimum scar formation at the wound site

Ayurvedic masters have stated that fistula-in-ano is a typical condition which challenges surgical, medical and medico-surgical methods of treatment, thanks to its recurrent nature. Susruta held that surgical approach involving excision of the fistulous tract would not throw up a final solution and suggested a para-surgical approach. That Susruta Samhita mentions versatile types of surgical, para-surgical and medical applications for this condition

shows its seriousness.

Kshara Sutra

Kshara sutra is a combination of kshara, an alkaline salt of plant origin and sutra, the medicated thread. Classical texts of Ayurveda mention it as an effective para-surgical treatment method for Bhagandra. It is effective for all those conditions which demand gradual excision of overgrown soft tissues including piles, polyps, warts, papillae and also non-healing chronic

sinuses and ulcers where debridement is an essential factor to permit a healthy healing pattern.

Kashar Sutra is, in a way, a 'chemical fistulectomy' rather than a surgical fistulectomy.

The technique

It is a simple minimally invasive surgical technique. The patient is made to lie down in lithotomy position taking all aseptic precautions. The fistulous track is first determined by probing

with a specially designed probe under ice cube analgesia or without any anesthesia and is then primarily threaded with plain suture which is replaced by the Kshara Sutra after 24 hours. In some cases, the primary suturing itself is done by Kshara Sutra. The two ends of the thread are tied to form a loop. The wound is dressed with medicated oil/ghee.

Kshara Sutra acts by virtue of chemical cauterisation. Its introduction into the fistulous tract is capable of "dissolving" the tough fibrous tissue and ultimately draining it out, creating a healthy base for healing. It destroys the infected material presents in the sinus and makes the wound free of infection. The medicated thread exerts a powerful debridement effect on the fistula tract and induces healing by fresh and healthy granulation tissue. The complete eradication of infection and fibrous tissues ensures complete cure of the disease.

The gradual and sustained chemical action of kshara sutra not only removes the debris from the site of fistula but also helps the growth of granulation tissues, thereby inducing a long awaited healing pattern from the depth of tissues.

After the first suture, the subsequent changes are done every week by rail road technique or by other methods for change of thread. The length of the thread is noted in centimeters. The healing is indicated from the decrease of the length of the thread. UCT (Unit Cutting Time) is the time taken to cut one cm of the length of tract, which is one week in most of the cases.

When there are excess fibrous tissues, the cutting rate may slow down. Nowadays, cutting time is brought down by hybridized techniques involving the use of machines like High Frequency Coagulator.

Under post operative procedure, the patient is advised to use warm water sitz bath, application of medicated oil and the use of regular laxatives during the treatment. Analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs can also be used, if needed. The number of sittings to cut the entire length of the track depends on age, sex, diet, physical activity and

nature of the patient in general.

Kshara sutra acts as a curette for the fibrous lining and slough. Curettage is due to proteolytic enzyme present in the thread and also because of the irritant action of the caustics. The chances of recurrence are almost nil because cutting and healing are simultaneous.

As a testimonial to Kshara Sutra's success, a study conducted by Clinical Research Enquiry at Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, shows that out of 700 patients 691 (98.7%) have been completely cured. In these 700 patients, 200 patients were having recurrent fistulae after operation.

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Do's and Don'ts

DO'S: Keep ano-rectal part clean and dry

Consume a lot of liquids

Use buttermilk

Eat fruits and vegetables especially cucumber, cabbage, carrot, etc

DON'TS: Avoid constipation and straining at the toilet

Avoid chilly, spicy and non-vegetarian food

Avoid sitting, standing and walking for long hours



WELLNESS ZONE



▶ ABHYANGAM

▶ GOOSEBERRY: YOUTHBERRY

▶ YOGA : SALAMBA SIRASANA

ABHYANGAM

Indulge yourself with an elaborate oil bath. It can do a lot of good to your body



Dr P S Sreekumar

Prevention is better than cure, they say. Oil bath, or Abhyangam in Ayurveda, is a good preventive measure, which also brings several benefits to the body.

It has been a custom in parts of the world where Ayurveda and herbal medicine are in vogue to have a bath after applying medicated oil all over the body. And it held the key to good health. Sadly, the custom has now taken a hit, what with hectic lifestyles not permitting people the luxury of time for an elaborate oil bath.

Oil bath pacifies Vata, nourishes the skin and tissues (dhatus) and dissolves toxins (ama).

Oil applied to the scalp and body seeps into the various layers of skin and nurtures it. It energises the digestive system and ensures energy supply to the other systems. It gives perfect vision and sound sleep. Also it helps prevent skin disease and rheumatologic disorders.

Oil bath also means a bonus of body massage. It leaves you profoundly relaxed, mentally and physically, and gives power to the muscles and softens the skin.

Choose your oil

Ayurvedic scriptures talk about different kinds of medicated oils and therapeutic indications along with the mode of application for people with different tridosha constitutions. There are

Oil bath slows down aging, enhances vision, improves sleep, minimizes the onset of joint pains and rheumatic ailments such as arthritis, osteoporosis and prevents sinusitis.



oils for general use also.

So choose your oil with care. Some oils are meant for the sick while others are for the healthy. Sesame oil is regarded as the best for all conditions. Coconut oil is advised for dandruff and psoriasis patients. Children with recurrent cough, fever, breathlessness and tonsillitis can use coconut oil processed with the leaves of Sahadevi (Poovam-kurunthila) or Akhukarni (Emilia sonchifolia).

Skin diseases like dry skin, dermatitis and fungal infections have considerably responded to coconut oil with Paranthi (Ixora coccinea). Regular use of black cumin seed-based oil keeps respiratory diseases and skin diseases away from children.

Oil your body

Every part of the body must be oiled, starting with the head. One has to remain oiled for at least 30 minutes before taking bath.

Those who are damp with perspiration should wait for the body to cool down

before applying oil.

Bathe

Following oil application, the body must be cleansed with warm water. Never go for a hot water shower on head as it is detrimental to the eyes. Bathing after dusk is not desirable.

Head bath

Individuals suffering from eye diseases, ear diseases, fever, cough,

other respiratory diseases, diarrhea and facial palsy should strictly avoid massage and head bath.

Oil bath pacifies Vata, nourishes the skin and tissues (dhatus), and dissolves toxins (ama). Besides, it leaves you profoundly relaxed, mentally and physically.

What you get

- Improved vision
- Sound sleep
- Power to the muscles
- Soft, shining skin
- Cure and protection from skin disease
- Protection from rheumatologic disorders
- Better digestion
- Improved energy levels
- Total relaxation of the body and mind

Kerala

group of restaurants

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Cocum
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Cocum
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01202 776539

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Ewell,
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Tel: 020 8393 0445

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Krishna's Inn
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Medicated oil meant for the body should not be applied on the head, but oil recommended for the scalp can be applied on the body.

Oils meant to arrest hair fall and stimulate growth is not good for a patient suffering from sinusitis or cold.

It is recommended to take bath at least half an hour to one hour after applying oil.

A morning Abhyangam is always advisable.

Oil	Main ingredients	Use
Amruthadi	Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia), sandal wood (santalum album), gooseberry.	Sleeplessness, burning sensation of eyes, feet, face, head, etc
Arimedadi	Arimeda (Acacia furnisiana), Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra).	Dental diseases , gum diseases, stomatitis
Asanavilvadi	Venga(Pterocarpus marsupium), Koovalam(Aeagle marmalos) Amritha etc.	Eye diseases, ear diseases, headache, neck pain
Eladi	Elam(Elatararia cardamomum), Kottam (sauceria lappa)	Complexion promoting, antitoxic, insect bite, cures itching, abscess, etc
Kayyunnyadi	Kayyonni(Eclipta alba, Amrut(Tinospora cordifolia), Gooseberry(Emblica officianale), milk	Canity, eye diseases, head ache, dental diseases
Baladhathryadi	Bala(-Sida cordifolia), Amruth, Gooseberry, Ramacha	Psychiatric complaints, sleeplessness, restlessness, burning sensation of body, eye diseases, induce cooling effect to body
Karpasasthyadi	Paruthikkuru(Gossepium herbacium), Bala(Sida)	Difficulty in elevating arm(Peri-arthritis shoulder), hemiplegia, facial palsy
Chandanadi	Chandana(Sandal wood), Aswagandha (Withania somnifera) , Deodar	Bleeding disorders, eye diseases, sleeplessness
Thekarajath-ylam	Kayyonni(Eclipta alba), Myrobalan(Terminalia chebula)	Cough, asthma
Triphaladi	Triphala, amruth, pterocarpus, bala	Canity, brittle hair, hairfall, sinusitis
Dhanwantharam	Root of Sida, milk and 34 other ingredients	For pregnant woman, post delivery care, sprain, contusion, urinary diseases
Dhurdhoorapa-tradi	Fruit and leaves of datura metal (Ummam)	Dandruff and hair fall
Nalpamaradi	Four latex plants, Turmeric	Skin diseases
Neelibhringadi	Neelini,(Indigofera tinctoria), Bhringaraja(Eclipta alba), milk, gooseberry	Hair growth, darkening of hair
Balaguluchy-adi	Sida, amruth, deodar	Pain, swelling of joints, burning sensations of body
Balaswagand-hadi	Bala, amukkuram, amruth etc.	Fever, cough, mental disorders, rheumatic complaints
Lakshadi	Kolarakku, Amukkuram, Curd	Recurrent attacks of fever, cough, breathlessness, mental diseases, fits
Ksheerabala	Sida cordifolia, milk	Rheumatic complaints, sleeplessness
Balahatadi	Sida cordifolia, Emblica officinalis	All kinds of headache, especially migraine.



h a r m o n i a

Ayurveda Beach Resort
KOVALAM



Abad offers the whole range of Ayurvedic wellness treatment and rejuvenation programme at Harmonia.

The ayurveda centre is run in collaboration with the renowned Ayurveda house of Kandamthuruthy to offer therapy packages under the supervision of qualified doctors and masseurs.



The resort offers 35 air-conditioned rooms and cottages with all modern amenities.

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All the hotels and resorts have Ayurvedic centres.

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GOOSEBERRY YOUTHBERRY

A power house of Vitamin C, gooseberry can fight ageing

Dr Vineetha P Kumar

Ayurveda considers gooseberry or Amalaki as the most effective rejuvenating agent in the plant kingdom. It has been fondly called as dhatri (mother or nurse) as it takes care of those who consume it.

Gooseberry is a powerful and sour small fruit that originated in the Himalayan mountain region. It is the fruit of a medium-sized deciduous tree which may grow in variable agro-climatic and soil conditions.

Botanically it is called *Emblica Officinalis* which comes under the family *Euphorbiaceae*. It can tolerate temperatures as high as 45 degree Celsius and freezing temperature also. Its natural habitat extends from Burma in the east to Afghanistan in the west.

Charaka Samhitha says Amalaki is equalent to Amrith, the elixir of life. Another feature of Amalaki is

that it contains all the tastes such as sour, astringent, sweet and pungent, except salty and hot tastes. Besides, it is one of the items in *Thriphala* which is being widely used for treating all diseases nowadays.

Amalaki helps in balancing the glucose-level in the blood and improves the haemoglobin-level. It acts as a potent anti-inflammatory medicine and is used in various gastrointestinal tract inflammations. It promotes spermatogenesis. It raises the total protein level and increases the body weight due to positive nitrogen balance. It has an effect on CNS also.

The concoction made out of Amalaki juice, turmeric powder and honey is the best for controlling the blood glucose-level. This concoction should be taken on an empty stomach. Besides, Amalaki is used to treat many complaints such

After his engagement with the young princess Sukanya, the great sage Chyawan realised that his aged and weakened body could be a burden to her. He sought the help of celestial physicians who prescribed him the formulation of a divine medicine, of which the chief ingredient was amla (Indian gooseberry). The sage prepared it and regained his youth. The divine formulation later came to be known as Chyawanprash.



as baldness, boils in the mouth, cataract, chicken pox, constipation, common cough, cold and fever, discharge of Albumin, dysentery, dyspepsia, premature ejaculation, hysteria, impure blood, eruptions, jaundice, migraine, obesity, nose bleeding, pimples and piles.

Taking Amalaki juice and Guduchi Satva (*Tynospora cardifolia* extract) twice a day is an effective remedy for piles and nonspecific epitis. In the case of jaundice, the mixture of Amalaki juice and honey is effective.

The powder mixture of dry Gooseberry and sugarcandy taken along with a glass of water on an empty stomach helps in stabilising blood cholesterol.

Researches are going on regarding the usage and effect of Amalaki on the human body. Preliminary research says that its extracts induce apoptosis and modify gene expression in Osteoclasts, involved in Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoporosis. Experimental preparations of leaves, bark and fruit have shown potential efficacy against diseases such as cancer, inflammation, age-related renal diseases and diabetes mellitus.

Gooseberry stimulates secretion of natural insulin. If one consumes one tablespoon of gooseberry juice plus one cup of fresh bittergourd juice a day it would prevent eye complications in diabetics. Gooseberry is being widely used to prepare pickles, wines, Arishtams as it is rich in Vitamin-C. It is a common practice, especially in Kerala during the winter season to eat the gooseberry which has been kept in honey for two months.

It is said that this can increase immunity. Vitamin-C is abundantly present in gooseberry. The main property of gooseberry is that the

Vitamin-C content in it does not diminish even after cooking. It was widely used for treatment of scurvy during the Hissar Famine of 1939-40.

In Ayurveda the paste of soaked dry Amalaki is used for the treat-



Amalaki is also known as Rasayana herb as it enhances and restores the process of conservation. Owing to that, it has got the synonyms like Abhaya (which gives strength) and Vayasya (prevent ageing and gives longevity).

PROPERTIES

Immunomodulator

Anti oxidant

Hypo glycemc

Hypo lipidemic

Hypo tensive

Antacid

Tonic

Mild laxative

ment like Thalapotichil, which cures all mental diseases. If one consumes a mixture of one tablespoon of dried Amalaki powder soaked in one cup of water overnight and 1/8 tablespoon of black pepper powder and 2 teaspoons of lime juice it will reduce anxiety.

BEAUTY TIPS

If the water in which dry gooseberry has been soaked for over 12 hours is used to wash hair it will give strength and colour to the hair. Dry gooseberry mixed with rice stalk is also good for the hair. The application of gooseberry paste plus honey on the face twice a day can give a natural glow to the skin.

The wrirer is consultant physician, Ayush, Ernakulam

YOGA

SALAMBA SIRASANA (THE HEAD STAND)

A P Jayadevan

The ancient books in Yatha yoga call Sirsasana the king of all asanas. It helps the brain draw plenty of prana (oxygen) and blood and its regular practice ensures a healthy and pure blood flow through the brain cells which rejuvenates them, increases the thinking power and makes thoughts clearer. The proper blood supply to the pituitary and pineal glands in the brain is highly beneficial for our growth, health and vitality. This posture is good for people suffering from loss of sleep, memory and vitality. It strengthens the lungs and keeps the body warm. It calms the mind, strengthens the arms, legs and spine, and improves body balance. Those who have high or low blood pressure should do this only after seeking advice from an expert.

To benefit fully from the practice of Yoga, one must also follow its philosophy. To understand the deeper message of Yoga, one must empty oneself totally and should cultivate the ability to listen to one's intuitions. One must also be mindful of the mystical experiences of the hatha yoga asanas, which help one find the purpose and meaning of life.

Sirsasana is one of the most important asanas and its practice can really reveal the depth of the symbolic and mystical expressions of Yoga which may take one to another level of experience. In this posture, one sees everything upside down, and this new vision is the gate-



The single most important and **beneficial** asana helps the brain draw plenty of prana and blood

way to explore one's own inner world from a new perspective. Here, instead of your feet, your head is rooted in the earth of daily life.

During the headstand, the root chakra—mooladhara—is in the top position. The top chakra, the thousand petalled lotus—sahasrara—is rooted on the ground. In the normal position, the divine inspirations of the sahasrara (amrithadhara) fall into the fire of passions and emotions in the root chakra. And in the headstand, the burning fire of passions can be controlled and utilised positively by divine inspirations from sahasrara.

Technique

1. Spread a thick mat on the floor and kneel on it.
2. Rest the forearms on the centre of the mat, tightly interlocking the fingers so that the palms form a cup.
3. Rest the crown on the mat and the back of your head touches the palms. (To do this you can move the knees towards the head slightly.)
4. After placing the head over the mat, raise the knees from the floor by moving the toes closer to the head.
5. With exhalation gently lift the legs off the ground with bent knees. Both feet should move simultaneously.
6. And now, extend the hips lifting the knees towards the ceiling, while keeping them flexed.
7. Now slowly stretch the legs up and

stand on the head, so that the whole body is perpendicular to the floor. After staying in the final position for one minute according to the practitioner's capacity, flex the knees and slowly slide down to the floor in the reverse order.

There are two important things to keep firmly in mind throughout your work on this pose.

The first is to keep the maximum possible distance between one's shoulders and the ears throughout the pose. The shoulders tend to creep up towards the ears causing the cervical vertebrae in the neck to become compressed. Prolonged compression of these vertebrae can lead to neck injury. Keeping distance between the cervical vertebrae will protect the neck during the pose.

Secondly, the body and spine should be aligned just as they are in *tadasana*, the simple standing "mountain" pose. The skeleton should be aligned so that the weight is primarily supported by the bones rather than by the muscles. This means that the ears, outer shoulders, outer hips, outer knees, and outer ankles are all in a line that is perpendicular to the floor. The lower back should have its normal concave arch. Too deep an arching of the lower back is unhealthy because it compresses the lumbar vertebrae and requires excessive muscular exertion to hold the pose.

The headstand necessitates abdominal and diaphragmatic breathing. Abdominal breathing should be the initial choice for novices. A beginner must seek the help of a friend or he should practice it against a wall. A good teacher's presence is a must for practicing this asana because a faulty posture in this case will lead to pains in the head, neck and back. It must be remembered that in this posture, the whole body weight should be on the head alone.

In the beginning it may be difficult to achieve this posture. For men, the common challenge is the poor flexibility of the hips. For women, relatively lesser upper body strength is a problem because in this asana, a greater portion of the body weight rests on the hips and thighs. To manage and balance this weight, they will have to develop more

To understand the deeper message of any asana one must empty oneself totally and should cultivate the ability to listen to one's intuitions.



strength in their upper extremities, back and abdomen. Men can try to develop more hip flexibility. Any posture that develops strength in the abdomen, back and upper extremities and any posture that improves hip flexibility will bring one closer to a successful headstand.

Many consider *Sirsasana* to be the single most important and beneficial asana in yoga. As a consequence, this

pose has often been referred to as the "king" of the asanas. The shoulder stand, *Sarvangasana*, is considered the "queen" of the asanas. *Sirsasana* excites the nervous system while *sarvangasana* calms it down. So, Yoga masters recommend that one practise *sarvangasana* after *Sirsasana* for at least an equal length of time to the time you have practiced *Sirsasana*.

The writer is a research scholar in Sanskrit at the Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University, Kalady, Kerala.



Champion of authentic Ayurveda

Thomas Vallomthrayil owes his life to the healing power of Ayurveda and hence chose to spread its message across the seas.

The efforts of Mr Thomas Vallomtharayil in developing Kerala as a health tourism destination got a big boost with the European Ayurvedic Centre under him signing an MoU with the Government of Kerala to this effect. "We will direct European patients to appropriate Indian centres for treatment. On their return from India, the Centre would provide coordinated follow-up treatment and medication," Mr Vallomtharayil said.

Met Mr Thomas Vallomthrayil, one of the chief evangelists of authentic Ayurveda in Europe, and Germany in particular. As head of the Castrop-Rauxel, the Germany-based European Ayurvedic Centre, and Kerala Ayurveda GmbH, Mr Vallomthrayil has not only strived for the propagation of Ayurveda but also fought relentlessly against the spread of its spurious versions. His long fight for the cause of genuine Ayurveda had the German authorities form guidelines for the practitioners, including doctors and therapists, on the lines of those implemented by the Government of India. It also helped initiate close interaction between the authorities in the two countries for greater cooperation in the field of Ayurveda.

The fight of Mr Vallomthrayil for the cause of authentic Ayurveda has its roots in his gratitude to it for saving his life. When he was 42, Mr Thomas was diagnosed with a rarely spread and researched lung disease which doctors said was fatal, and granted him a life of a maximum five more years. He consulted some of the best physicians in Germany who offered him no cure. Disheartened, Mr Thomas, who hailed from Kerala, decided to visit his birthplace once again and meet with his near and dear ones for one last time.



During his stay, he met an old friend, an Ayurveda doctor, who convinced him to try Ayurveda. While he was undergoing panchakarma therapy, his two other doctor-friends – an allopath and a homeopath – also offered to pitch in with their treatment ideas. They sat together and designed a treatment course which took him out of the difficult situation.

Fourteen years later, Mr Vallomthrayil is today a healthy businessman, busy expanding his empire across the globe.

On his return to Germany, Mr Vallomthrayil realised that Ayurveda, with its healing powers, could do a lot of good to millions of patients suffering from chronic diseases, especially those related to rheumatism, diabetes,

heart and bone diseases. With international organisations such as the World Health Organisation acknowledging the scientific basis of Ayurveda, it enjoyed high acceptance among people.

Mr Vallomthrayil, however, realised that ordinary Europeans have no access to authentic and genuine Ayurveda. There are many Ayurveda institutes even in Germany, but they are not well-equipped or have no well-trained practitioners to offer quality Ayurveda. Some of them subject patients to procedures which are expressly banned by Ayurveda principles. Like the beachside 'Ayurveda massage centres' exposing patients to strong sea winds after panchakarma therapy. Mr Thomas realised that most 'therapists' in these massage centres had undergone just

12-30 days of theoretical course before joining, or even opening, 'Ayurveda centres.' The worse part of the story is that even Ayurveda doctors supported this unethical practice.

Mr Vallomthrayil decided not to watch the charade in silence. In the late Nineties, he launched a campaign propagating the real value and meaning of Ayurveda by holding a series of seminars on Ayurveda. He informed the North Rhine-Westphalian state Government about the possibilities of Ayurveda in the German Health system and, at the same time, the dangers of the spread of the spurious variety. He also communicated with the Government of Kerala about the ill-reputation that badly managed centres brought to Ayurveda.

His crusade bore fruit in 2002 when the government invited him, along with

Mr Thomas Vallomthrayil, 55, represents the face of the community of businessman who made it big on the foreign shores but with heart that beats for the land of their birth. Mr Vallomthrayil had moved to Germany when he was all of 20 where he was trained as a dialysis technician. He fast gained ground within the branch and created the first training video in German for dialysis for nurses. He also developed a recycling machine for dialysis filters. He was so reputed for his contribution to his chosen field that Ministry for Ecological Affairs, the under Angela Merkel (the present German Chancellor) made him a member of the 13-member expert committee on recycling of plastics.

In 1985, Mr Vallomthrayil set up his company for the management of dialysis centres. The offerings included consulting for medical companies and setting up of turnkey dialysis centres. In 1992, he started his first own dialysis centre, the first one in Germany run by a non-medical professional. With the business getting off to a smooth start, he set up Medizinische Hilfe für Indien e.V. / Kidney Foundation, a Germany-based organisation that collects dialysis machines from centres and sends them to clinics in India and offer dialysis at low cost. "We have till now sent 25 machines and have saved thousands of lives, especially of those who suffer from snakebites or other toxæmias," he said.



officials from Kerala, for a meeting for setting up standards for Ayurveda practice in Germany. "It was a turning point," says Mr Vallomthrayil. The next year, apart from officials of Kerala and NRW, secretary to the AYUSH department, Government of India, also attended the meeting. It was felt at the meeting that there should be a company which had the commitment to bring the AYUSH standards to Germany, and that led to him launching Kerala Ayurveda GmbH. German authorities agreed to help the company with regulatory issues.

The German government also formulated guidelines for Ayurveda therapists with the cooperation of various Ministries, Institutes and vocational schools apart from AYUSH and the

Kerala Health Ministry. It designed a three-year course for Ayurveda practitioners with government recognition. The Medial Park Ruhr, a medical academy completed in 2007 under Mr Vallomthrayil, is now planning to offer various courses for therapists and post-graduate programmes for medical doctors. The Federal Ministry of Health, Germany, has now joined the project. Mr Vallomthrayil says the project will enhance the image and effectiveness of Ayurveda in Germany and other European countries. "Of the more than 6,000 Ayurvedic institutes now functioning in Germany, only about 20 have qualification equivalent to BAMS," he said.

Mr Vallomthrayil was also instrumental in the visit of representatives

from NRW Health Ministry and the Federal Ministry for Research and Education to Kerala and AYUSH to discuss the establishment of a concerted flow of patients from Germany to India, cooperation in clinical research and exchange of students. "It was a success in that the governments decided to implement new standards for Ayurveda education and training, increase the number of patients being sent to India."

Today, Mr Vallomthrayil has the close links with professional ayurvedic centres in Kerala and refers patients there. The centre would direct European patients to appropriate Indian centres. After their return from India, the Centre would provide coordinated follow-up treatment and medication.

THE PATENT DEBATE

The desirability of using patented medicine is a subject for hot debate among Ayurveda practitioners. Here are some responses to the discussion Ayurveda-Health and Tourism initiated in the last issue.

Dr Ajith Kumar K, Reader, Rasasasstra and Bhaishajya Kalpana (Ayurvedic pharmacy), Pankajasthuri Ayurveda College, Thriuvananthapuram, says that using of quality patent medicines is always good and that it should be promoted.

"Whether it is classical or patent, it should bring relief to the patient. From my experience, I have felt that the combination of traditional and patent medicines has good effect in the treatment of some diseases. For example, some years ago a child who had sinusitis consulted me after no improvement from other branches of medicines. I prescribed Septilin, a Himalaya product, and Amritharishtam. Within a week, the patient got well. Like that, another

New research techniques and new medicines are the need of the hour. Otherwise Ayurveda will go back by 5000 years, says Dr Bijumon O C, lecturer.

patient aged 32 had venous ulcer. I recommended the above medicinal combination

and it was also a success. So, we cannot avoid patent medicines," said Ajith Kumar.

Dr Bijumon O C, lecturer, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Paryaram, also echoed the same view. "Though we cannot say all patented medicines have good efficacy, there are some products which produce good results. Ayurveda acharyas have advised new doctors that necessary modifications can be done in medicines according to the availability of drugs and nature of patient and severity of diseases. So, grouping of drugs as classical and patented is not right. It is better to call patent drugs as new generation Ayurvedic drugs and the selection of the medicine depends up on the physician and the condition of the patient."

He said that Guggulu panchapala choornam is a popular preparation for many ailments. But it is very difficult to administer this classical presentation, especially for children. Now many institutions manufacture the product in tablet form which allows easy consuming. "New research techniques and new medicines are the need of the hour.

Otherwise Ayurveda will go back by 5,000 years."

While the supporters of patented medicines came out in the open, some of their sworn opponents chose to remain anonymous. "Patented medicines are really violating Ayurveda principles," said a senior practitioner. "The first line of treatment in Ayurveda is to normalise the basic abnormality which is inferred by assessing the signs and symptoms. For example, treatment for allergy should begin with detoxifying the blood that got contaminated due to the individual's erroneous lifestyle. A physician will decide on the treatment after assessing a host of factors such as symptoms, habituation, body constitution, age, appetite and lifestyle. How is it possible to administer a readily available patented medicine in this treatment? Or, how can one administer the same medicine for arthritis in degenerative as well as inflammatory arthritis? So an Ayurvedic physician prescribes medicines with the treatment principles in mind and not with patent drugs or single drugs."

But some would like to stick their neck out. "From my limited knowl-

edge, I strongly prefer classical medicines," says Sreedevi N Nampoothiry, a final year BAMS student of Amrita Ayurveda Medical College, Vallikkavu. The preference is due to the proven efficacy of the classical medicines though there are practical difficulties administering them. "The Acharyas clearly mention that selection and administration of drugs should be on the basis of the patient's prakrithi, vikruthi, etc. But patent drugs do not subscribe to that concept," says Sreedevi.

Sreejith Satheesan, another final year Ayurveda student, at Pankajasthuri Ayurveda College, Thriuvananthapuram, also prefers classical medicines while he does not write off the patented ones. "Though I prefer classical drugs, I am not at all against the patent ones." He says any medicine should meet certain essential prerequisites. The first is, whether they are prepared in the classical method or are they a mere mixture of herbs, and the second, do they have the correct combination and proper interaction with the surrounding compounds so as to give the desired therapeutic effects. "Our Acharyas prescribed different formulations keeping in mind the action of ingredients in a combination," Sreejith said. "Most of the patent drugs rely upon certain key ingredients or chemical isolates for which the company owns patents. For example, Sarpagandha, which is used in classical preparations, is good for hypertension. But if its active ingredient reserpine is used separately, it could cause depression in the long run. This happens because reserpine is not supported by required other compounds for its proper pharmacodynamics."

Patented medicines tend to ignore the formulations prepared on the basis of the action of ingredients in a combination and rely on certain key ingredients or chemical isolates for which the company owns patents, says Sreejith Satheesan, final year BAMS student.

Ayurveda Equipments

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	Dharapathi (Wood & FRP) with adjustable Table			
STEAM BATH SYSTEM Lying type (Model-II)	Steam bath system (Sitting & Lying)			ALL-AROUND WOODEN TABLE
	Dhara stand with vessel			
STEAM BATH - Sitting Type	Awagaha Tub			WOODEN DHRONI ON TUBULAR TABLE
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HOME IS WHERE THE HEARTH IS

Das Sreedharan's Rasa restaurant chain is all about the virtues of healthy food

Food is medicine, said Ayurveda gurus long back. You can meet one of the best practitioners of this creed today on the banks of the River Thames. Enter the Rasa Restaurant chain in London, and you can find master chef Das Sreedharan, who also runs it, busy experimenting with recipes. A native of Kerala, Das has tickled the palates of the multi-ethnic community in the distant London with his authentic South Indian food, mostly vegetarian. While insisting on the goodness of home-cooked food, Das's chain also offers take-away food, and has made a success of the business. Might sound a paradox, but true.

Das Sreedharan prepares unlikely recipes. And the most unlikely one is he himself: an accountant by training, owner of a successful chain of restaurants, and an apparachik of home-cooked food!

From the teenager who picked up cooking tips from his mother's kitchen and the vegetable garden she nurtured in Chalakkudy in Kerala, South India, Das has come a long way, literally too. In the distant Britain, he has made classy Londoners admirers of South Indian vegetarian food with all its spices.

When Das started off in 1994 with his first Rasa restaurant, the customers were only Indians. Today, his nine restaurants floor Londoners of all ethnicities who find his offerings irresistible. For non-vegetarians, there is meat and sea-food also, all cooked and served in the same south Indian way. For those who are in a hurry, his Express restaurants serve take-away dishes.

Das is not just a hawker of food. He is more of a seller of the idea of good food. "For me, food is a celebration of life," he says. For him, it is profoundly linked to everything important in life; health, sense of wellbeing, to those we love and the very world around us. "Surrounded by fast food and junk food and supermarkets, it's easy to lose the significance of food," he said.

"We strive to prepare the best Indian food: the delicious, home-cooked food, made with the same love, care and thoughtfulness that a mother would devote." All his chefs attend Rasa Gurukul, his own school of hospitality back in Kerala so that everyone imbibes the spirit of what the boss means, and translate them into products.

He broke the Indian cooking with its myriad ingredients to its basics and convinced the English, who had dreaded it, that "they are very simple, healthier and use little oil". The art of

cooking is simple, and it needs to be so, he declares introducing his book 'The New Taste of India'.

He has also let out the secret of the South Indian cooking: ginger, curry leaves, tamarind and coconut are essential ingredients of all the dishes. "Some are as simple as six," he says. All of them are added at different stages of the cooking so the flavours are built up in layers.

For Sreedharan, every single ingredient, and every process he employs in cooking, depicts life. Looking at the passion with which he explains what happens when mustard seeds breaks themselves down in boiling coconut oil and add flavour to the curry, you would wonder if he explains about nuclear fission. You would feel he adds love, passion, care and goodness in the recipe to make his offerings whole.

Das believes it does not require too much time and effort to cook good food. "It's just there," he says, "available, sometimes nicer than others, and easily thrown away if we don't like it." And the restaurants are not just eating joints: they are a platform where Indian classical art and music treat the connoisseurs to their hearts full.

The ace chef does not limit his reach to food: he talks beyond it. "To have good food, we need to respect the environment in which it grows," he says. "Being part of this link between farming, gardening and cooking is to experience something very basic yet very profound, something in this world of ours that is good not only for each of us, but all of us at the same time."

Das now owns a beautiful riverside farm in Kerala which he has converted into Rasa Gurukul, a centre for culinary excellence, hospitality and culture to be open to guests where they can learn many things, and through its relaxed but deeply engaging daily schedules. He has plans to set up a similar project in the UK.

The Rasa Spice Trail Tour, another unique offering, takes guests on a culinary and spiritual journey around Kerala with Das as leader.

He also hosts 'An Evening With Das' at his restaurants, an evening of story telling where he shares food facts and

cookery skills.

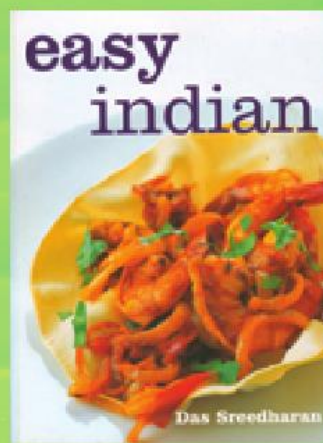
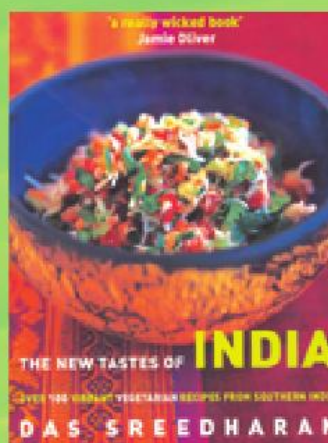
Now that he has tasted the first blood in cooking, he wants everybody to enjoy it. "We are starting a programme this year to give professional training in traditional Indian vegetarian cooking," Das says. "Our programme is conceived to provide not only training in the art of cooking, but also to instill a deeper connection with nature and the ingredients through organic farming, and also to promote community

involvement through interactions with the elderly and children."

The programme also aims at addressing the isolation of chefs by bringing in more meaningful interaction with people: be it the customers who appreciate their art as chefs or fellow staff or anyone from the community who want to share their wisdom and experience.

Like food, like business: it's healthy when whole.

The chief ingredients of all south Indian food are ginger, curry leaves, tamarind and coconut. And the flavours are built up in layers as the ingredients are added at different stages of the cooking.



THE ESSENCE OF INDIAN COOKING

'The New Tastes of India' is a user's guide to South Indian vegetarian cooking. It never takes the beaten track of describing cooking as a great adventure. Instead, it breaks down the process to its basics, explaining the ingredients, where to buy them and store them and what are the ways in which they are used. It covers a variety of dishes including snacks, pickles & chutneys, soups, side dishes, thorans and salads. True to a guide, there is an introduction to everything he says in the book: there is one to the book which says how simple South Indian vegetarian cooking is, then one to the sections, like 'curries', which informs the general nature of what they are and when they are used. And there is an introduction

to each recipe as well! The writer never talks like an expert, but easily connects himself to the reader. Introducing 'Spinach with baby potatoes,' he says, "According to my father, this dish is a fusion of Indian and English cuisine that originated during colonial times." It surely is meant to be used in kitchens, and not to be stored in libraries.

Easy Indian is a collection of recipes he gathered from his homeland as well as his own discoveries in his Rasa restaurants. The variety of recipes in the book is amazing in that it ranges from snacks to fashionable Indian dishes.

Both the book have one thing in common: compelling the reader to love his home cooked food.



Ayurveda bloom in port of roses

Portoroz in Slovenia to host international meet on Indian health science

The efforts to spread the message of Ayurveda in the West, especially Europe, will get a momentum with Slovenia hosting an International Conference on Ayurveda. To be held on March 5 and 6 in at Portoroz, a coastal town in Slovenia and one of the country's largest tourist centres, the conference aims at bringing all the stake holders of Ayurveda on a common platform in terms of interdisciplinary approach in order to raise public awareness about Ayurveda and integrating Ayurveda and Modern Medicine.

The conference will be organised jointly by University of Primorska (Slovenia), Embassy of India in Slovenia and the Department of AYUSH, Government of India.

The meet will discuss a wide range of topics with subjects relating to pure academics to the propagation of Ayurveda in Europe. Prof Ram Harsh Singh, professor Emeritus, Banaras Hindu University, will deliver the keynote address on 'Perspectives in Panch Karma Therapy'.

While Dr Vishwas Mehta, Secretary of Health, Government of Kerala, will present the topic 'Experience with Ayurveda in Kerala', Mr Thomas Vallomtharayil will present a paper on 'Translating Traditions - Implementing Quality Standards of Ayurveda in Europe' in the panel discussions.



Arabian Travel Market in May

The 16th edition of Arabian Travel Market, the industry's leading travel and tourism exhibition, promises to offer four days of intensive meetings, seminars, press conferences and social networking opportunities.

Arabian Travel Market, to be held in Dubai from May 5 to 8, will unlock the business potential within the Middle East region and uniting key market players from six continents. Tourism destinations from the Middle East and around the world will come together at the meet to showcase a diverse range of accommodation options, breathtaking tourism attractions and new airline routes. The 2008 event hosted a record number of travel industry representatives, with 2,229 exhibitors and over 16,000 visitors over the four days.

Seminar@ Italy

Thrissur-based leading Ayurveda institution SNA Oushadashala (P) Ltd is organising an International Conference on Ayurveda - 'Ayurveda: the meaning of life, awareness, environment and health' in Milano, Italy on March 21-22 this year. "The conference will be the first scientific event devoted to MAN, who is originated according to a belief - as a result of interactions between awareness, environment and health which plays a significant role in the existence of each human being," said Ashtavaidyan P T N Vasudevan Mooss, chairman and managing director, SNA Oushadashala. The first day of the conference is reserved for physicians and Ayurvedic physicians while second day for people from preventative health, lifestyle and caring for the environment for well being.

In the two-day programme, eminent scholars like Prof. Brian D. Josephson (Nobel Laureate in Physics), Prof. Bhushan Patwardhan, Dr Alex Hankey, Dr. Gianluigi Marini, Dr. Darshan Shankar, Mark Rosenberg, Dr. Ernesto Iannaccone, Vaidya Atreya Smith, Dr. Nikolaos Kostopoulos, Dr. Ram Manohar, Dr. Ashtavaidyan A N Narayanan Nambi, Dr Carmelo Scarcella, Dr Antonio Morandi etc will present their papers.

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Third World Ayurveda Congress



The third edition of World Ayurveda Congress, seeking to explore ways to repositioning Ayurveda to meet the requirements of the day and exploit its potential as an independent medical system to the maximum, was held from December 16 to 21, 2008 in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Jointly organised by the Department of Ayush, Government of India, Department of Health, Rajasthan and the National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, WAC brought together all sectors of Ayurveda at a common place to disseminate ideas and information. More than 4,000 delegates from 50 countries including the United States, Germany and the SAARC nations attended the meet.



Kerala to encourage authentic Ayurveda



Kerala Health Minister P K Sreemathi has said the government is doing everything possible for the development of Ayurveda as an alternative branch of medical science. The government will take possible statutory and legal measures to ensure that people have access to authentic Ayurveda, the Minister told Ayurveda and Health Tourism on the sidelines of the World Ayurveda Conference held in Jaipur. "Among the steps that the government has taken includes the setting up of a separate Drug Controller and Drug Control Department for Ayurveda, the first for any State in India. The grading of Ayurveda treatment centres will also help the growth of Ayurveda as it would encourage people to go in for quality in all matters relating to Ayurveda, she said.



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A portal with these and much more customer-friendly facilities has been developed under the guidance of Ayurveda Doctors by Aymex Service Pvt. Ltd in Kerala, the cradle of Panchakarma Therapies. Ayurport is a one-stop shop for Ayurveda service providers globally. Ayurveda doctors, practitioners of Traditional medicine, therapists, trainings centres, yoga centres, organic bio shops and travel agents worldwide are brought together

to a platform, free of cost, so that they can interact with their customers and other service providers. It is the intention of the portal provider to bring Ayurveda as the leading medical system of the world because it has been tested through the centuries.

Miss Helen Milz could get up from her wheel chair and walk after a 10 days Ayurveda Treatment in Kerala. She came to know about Ayurveda from Mr Joseph Kaduthanam, a travel agent in Germany. He arranged her Ayurveda treatment in Kerala, as she could not find help in Germany for more than five months.

As Mr Milz saw his daughter walking, he prompted Mr Kaduthanam to spread the hidden treasures of Ayurveda world over. Mr Kaduthanam was already engaged in Ayurveda medical tourism since 1985. The first medical tourist was Mrs. Mueller, a 65-year German lady, who got relief from her rheumatic complaints through Ayurveda. In fact her story was broadcast on ZDF, a

German TV which ignited interests on Ayurveda in Germany.

With more people in the West realising the effectiveness of traditional and Herbal medicine in treating chronic diseases over modern medicine using chemical drugs, Ayurveda is getting an upper hand in the modern world. Even international organisations such as World Health Organisation are supporting traditional medicinal systems for treating chronic diseases of billions of people around the world. Ayurveda offers effective treatment against chronic diseases. Few people in world are aware of this. Many are brought to think Ayurveda as a massage system. Only a fortunate few, like Helen Milz had the chance to know about Ayurveda.

The developers of 'Ayurport' firmly believe that in a few years Ayurveda would top the medical world offering effective treatments against chronic diseases.



GLOSSARY

Abhyangam

This is done with a combination of specially prepared Ayurvedic herbal oils and applied all over the body. This prevents early aging and relieves muscular aches and pain.

Arishta/Asava

Fermented formulation.

Ashtangahridayam

One of the classical ayurvedic texts written by Vagbhata.

Ghrita

Ghee based drug.

Gurukula

The Indian traditional method of tutelage where the disciple stays with his preceptor until the learning completes.

Kashayam

Decoction.

Kashayadhara

Specified herbal decoctions are poured into the eyes from a specific height for a specific period.

Kashayavasthi

Medicated enema.

Nasyam

Administration of medicine through nose.

Netradhara

This involves pouring of herbal decoction through the inner corners of the eyes which are allowed to flow through the whole eye. The process is repeated for both eyes.

Rasayana chikitsa

Rejuvenative treatment.

Samanam

Palliative medicine.

Shashtika sweda

It is performed by massaging the closed

eyes with a poultice made of herbal milk decoction paste for a prescribed time and under controlled pressure. Shashtika sweda is effective in cases with high astigmatism and weak and for people with small eye balls.

Sirodhara

The Sanskrit term used for a process in which medicated oil, decoction, milk, buttermilk, etc is poured on the forehead with the help of a wick in order not to stop the continuous flow of the oil used.

Sirovasti

Retaining of oil on head fixing leather cap in a befitting manner.

Sodhanam

Purifactory treatment.

Snehapanam

Oral administration of medicated ghee/oil adopting incremental dosage schedule.

Snehavasthi

Medicated enema.

Tarpanam

A treatment for chronic ophthalmic diseases. It is done externally, on the orbit of the eyes.

Thakra Dhara

In this treatment, medicated milk, medicated buttermilk and some herbal oils are poured on the forehead.

Virechanam

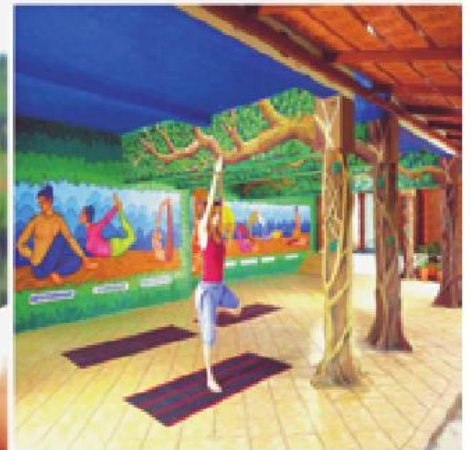
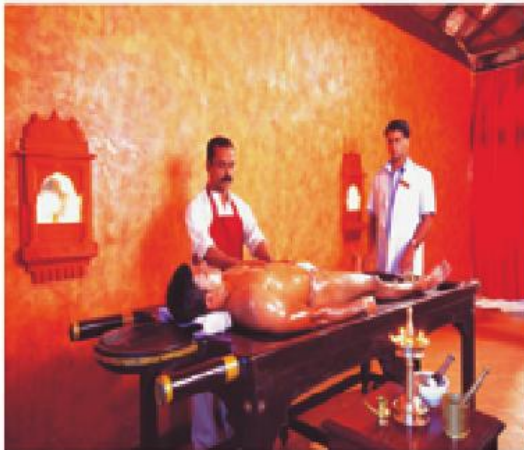
Herbal decoction and herbal powders are given in early morning to evacuate stomach.

Vamanam

Decoction, honey and other medicine are given in early morning to generate vomiting.



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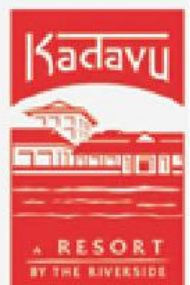
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Sirodhara

Soothes away mental stress, treats insomnia, headaches, and neurological ailments.



Pizhichil

Rejuvenates body, provides relief from aching and crackling joints.



Greevavasthi

Treats spondylosis, inter-vertebral disc prolapse and neck pains.



Udwarthanam

Weight-reduction therapy that detoxifies and renders a lustrous glow.



Elakizhi

A massage to relieve body pain and aches.



Nethratharpanam

Soothes the nerves around eyes, relieves strain and improves sight.



Njavarkkizhi

An effective therapy for rheumatic complaints.



Abhayangam

Assists energy flow through body, promotes relaxation and revitalizes cells.