

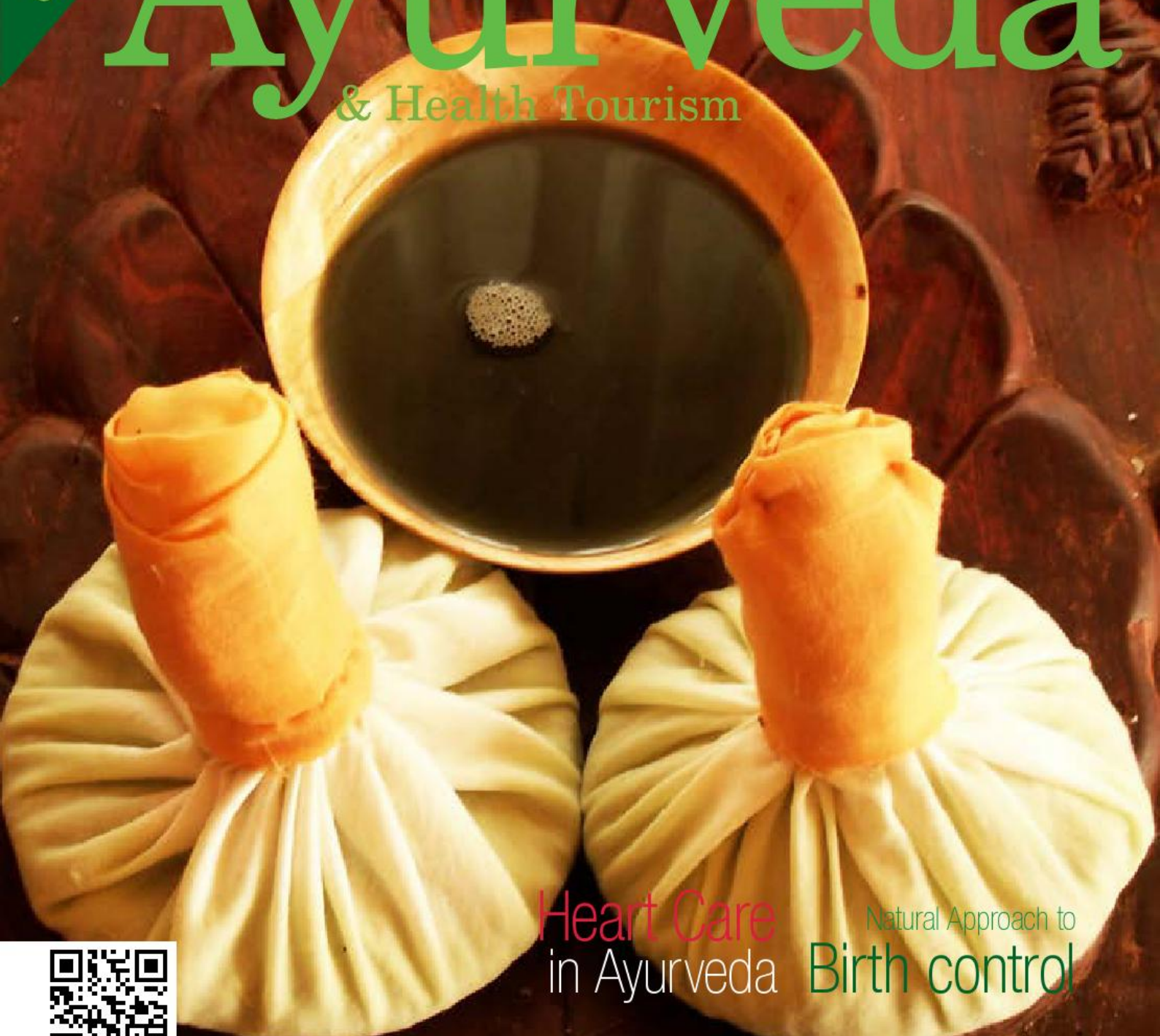
ATM14  
Special Issue

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# Ayurveda

## & Health Tourism



Heart Care  
in Ayurveda

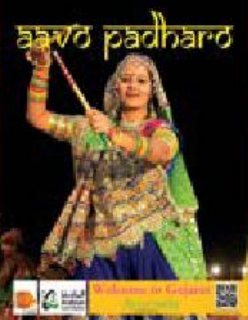
Natural Approach to  
Birth control



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Management of  
Multiple Sclerosis  
-The Ayurveda Way

Total Fitness  
The **Yoga** way



AN FM MEDIA PUBLICATION





# KALARI KOVILAKOM

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\* A NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD FOR HOSPITALS & HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS (NABH) ACCREDITED HOSPITAL FOR AYURVEDIC HEALING



Can there be a royal road to deep healing? We believe there can. Kalari Kovilakom is the Palace for Ayurveda, perhaps the first and only one of its kind. It offers intensive programmes in wellness, based on this ancient Indian science. And it offers them in a magnificent palatial setting that took years of restoration to create. Yet, Kalari Kovilakom gives you something infinitely more valuable.

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Panchakarma is the classic five-point revitalization treatment. The panchakarma rejuvenation process is intensive and closely follows the early texts of ayurveda like the Charaka Samhita and the Sushutha Samhita. There are five basic Shodhanas or cleaning methods which are Nasyam, Vamanam, Virechanam, Vasthi and Rakthamoksham.

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The Ayurvedic slimming programme works by increasing the metabolism. The prescribed non-Kapha producing foods relieve the system of excess Kapha and also control Vata. The programme, which includes medicated steam baths, herbal teas and yoga, works to create genuine metabolic change.



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## Rasayana Chikitsa (Anti-aging)

The programme starts with a two week cleansing treatment to eliminate toxins. Only then does the rejuvenation treatment start, with medications and diet. The aim is to arrest the degeneration of body cells and increase immunity. In fact, this treatment helps to keep individuals free from disease even at an advanced age.



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The essence of ayurveda  
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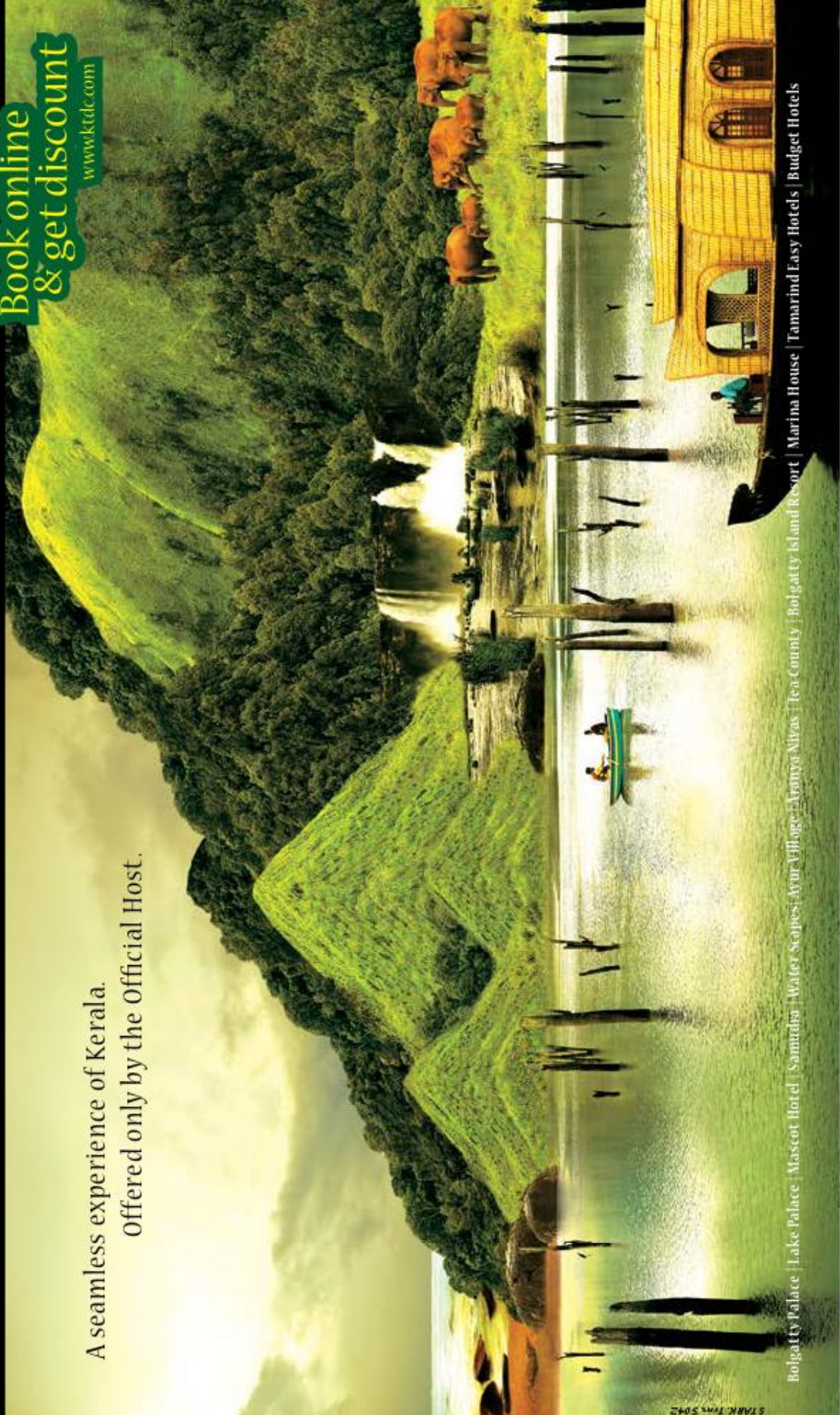
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## Need of the Hour

How to keep healthy? This is the crucial question we all face. Even though we live in a world of fantabulous technical advancements, we have limitations in the self-care section. A number of diseases loom large before us, where modern healthcare science has nothing much to do other than trying some palliative or management efforts.

The cost of medicines and treatments is getting skyrocketing every year and many of the stakeholders in healthcare field have downgraded themselves to mere profit-making institutes.

Experiments which occur all over the world in the name of medicine development crossed the limits and are going on without ethics. Medications are given as per the interest of manufacturers and not for the benefit of patients.

Antonio Morandi, Neuro scientist and an Ayurvedist from Italy, reminds us of our confusion: "You may have technology which has culture, but you cannot have technology without culture. And you may have culture alone. But if you confuse the technology with the culture you will have big problems".

And he continues: " Modern man thinks that he can control nature with his technology. He tries to decide what nature should do. It is not the way. We need culture and technology in tune with nature. We need an opening of minds and also a humanitarian approach to bridge both streams, Eastern and Western or Modern and ancient wisdom".

An alternative model is the need of the hour, which considers man as a whole, fine tuned with nature. We have wisdom, ancient and modern, as our legacy. Only thing we have to do is to combine and synthesise what we have.

Ayurveda and Health Tourism has been in pursuit of this truth since its inception. We are so proud to be in the path of disseminating the all-inclusive ancient wisdom, Ayurveda, across the continents all these years.

The cover-story of this ATM special issue elaborates on Ayurvedic management of Multiple Sclerosis for our readers. We hope our readers and well-wishers will benefit from this and will continue to support our efforts to carry the message of Ayurveda further.

- Editor

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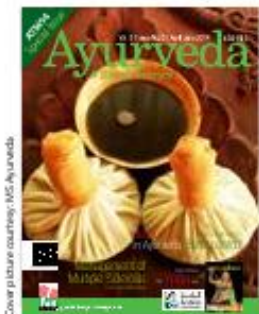
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## “A STEP TO SERENITY..... A WALK TO REMEMBER”



In Sanskrit the word Sopanam means 'sacred steps'.  
As the name denotes Sopanam Multispecialty Ayurvedic Hospital is a  
perfect blend of spruceness, serenity and sacredness.

Ayurveda, the ancient healthcare science of India has its origin in Vedas, the most ancient scriptures of the world. Human life is composed of sharira, indriya, satwa, atma and manas - says Ayurveda. These five components have to be in perfect equilibrium for a healthy living. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of keeping mind and body calm to be free of ailments..

### **Sopanam Multi-specialty Ayurvedic hospital**

Sopanam, nestled in an ambience that calls for nothing other than joy and peace of mind beckons you to recoup your physical stamina and mental tranquility the most natural

way. Sopanam is surrounded by 6 acres of serene green land with perennial cool breeze that soothes your spirits. Ubiquitous bird calls will remind you that you are in the lap of pristine nature.

*Sopanam is accredited with Green Leaf Certification from the Government of Kerala.*

**Our Location:** The hospital is situated at Nadavarambu in Irinjalakuda near Thrissur, the cultural capital of Kerala. It is surrounded by historical places like Koodalmanikyam Temple, Mukundapuram Temple, Kodungallur Temple, St. Thomas Cathedral Church and Cheraman Juma Masjid. The perfect location where divinity showers in from all sides makes Sopanam the pedestal of divine medication. .

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- Well qualified and experienced therapists perform the Panchakarma treatments the most authentic way.
- All the treatment rooms are furnished in traditional elegance and they make you fall in love with them.
- Special dishes as per prescribed dietary restrictions in the meals served at Sopanam.
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We must specially mention here that we have a good track record of managing and curing advanced cases of paralysis, gout and psoriasis from India and overseas. Various rejuvenation packages and treatment packages are available here as per the convenience of each patient. Advance reservations can be made online or over phone. Emailid: info@sopanamayurvedic.com

**GOUT ( HYPERURICEMIA) IN AYURVEDA :** The Ayurvedic term for Gout is 'Vata-Rakta'. or 'Aadya Vata'.The humor Vata is responsible for all movements, pressure forces and impulses. Rakta Dhātu represents blood and associated metabolism. Hence the term Vata-Rakta signifies the association of Vata disorder (joint pain) along with vitiated Pitta dosha and Rakta Dhātu.

#### Cause

High Uric Acid levels in blood, or Hyperuricemia, is the universal factor present in Gout. It causes problems like kidney stones after deposition of urate crystals. It is often recurrent in nature. Function of kidneys is affected and, in aggravated cases, even kidney failure may occur as crystals block a number of tubules in the kidney.

Arthritis results when urate crystals get deposited in joints and surrounding tissues. It is a chronic and progressive disorder. It is long lasting with one or more acute episodes accompanied with intense pain in a year.

When high blood uric acid is present without causing any symptoms, it is simply called Silent or Asymptomatic Hyperuricemia.

#### Signs & symptoms

The pain of gout is sudden in onset and it is intense. Ayurveda mentions it like a stinging pain as felt when a scorpion bites.

- The sudden and intense pain is felt more often, more intensely at night.
- Big toe is the most commonly affected joint. However, it can occur in other places in your feet, ankles, knees, hands, wrists and other joints as well.
- Generally, there is warmth, swelling and redness of joints and surrounding areas. Often there is painful tenderness on touching the joints.
- The pain is intense for a few days at the start. Later, when the severe pain subsides, the discomfort and pain remains there for few days to weeks.

**Ayurvedic method of management :** The patient is given anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving and anti-degenerative herbs to check the progression of disease, to relieve symptoms, to improve joint structure and to improve flexibility and movement. Our short to long-term preventive and curative treatment aims to balance your metabolism, detoxify and cleanse the system with special herbs.

Along with Ayurvedic herbs, Panchakarma treatments like simple massage, patrapotali sweda and churnapotali sweda are helpful in relieving problems like pain and redness. It helps improve flexibility. The overall emphasis is to relieve the symptoms in the natural manner, without side effects. Then, all efforts are made to keep uric acid level under control so that you have less chance of repeated attacks.

**Diet in Gout :** Control or avoid : excessive intake of salty, sour, pungent, bitter, alkaline, oily, and hot foods; eating dried & preserved or spoiled fish/meat, horse gram, black gram, nishpava (anumulu, a bean variety), sour curd or buttermilk; incompatible foods, drinking alcohol, daytime sleep, staying awake in the night, anger, etc.



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# Ayurveda- Prevailing Myths and Prejudices



**Ayurveda- “The Indian System of Medicine” was developed, polished and enriched by knowledge accrued from centuries. With a rich history filled with highs and lows over the years, Ayurveda, as a medical system, is gaining a lot of ground today in the modern scientific world. However, the myths and prejudices pertaining to the Ayurvedic system of medicine precede the actual facts. Many ideas about Ayurveda in the common man’s mind are far from reality. Let’s flash a light into a few of them.**





### **Ayurveda – It's slow and meant for Old age?**

People believe that Ayurvedic treatments are meant for those who have time at their discretion. In Ayurvedic terms, either the medicines directly act on the disease, or it helps support the body to cure the disease by itself by balancing the tridoshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha). Both are needed in the treatment of diseases. The medicines that belong to the first category are usually very potent and fast acting, while the action of the medicines in the latter group depends on the chronicity of the disease.

Another important cause for the slow action is the lack of availability of genuine medicines. Many of the herbs, animal products and minerals mentioned in classics are not easily available now. This leads to adulterants and substitutes being used in place of the original raw- materials. Many of the available herbal drugs are either cultivated using chemical fertilizers or procured from contaminated areas. In addition to all these, there are problems associated with the preparation of the medicines as well. In the old days, the vaidyas prepared their own medicines or the patients prepared them on the instruction of the vaidya. The preparation of Ayurvedic medicines, which is analogous to cooking in some

respects, has now changed drastically with medicines being manufactured on a commercial scale. Inevitably, the medicines available in the market today differ from those prepared by old school, similar to how tinned food differs from home- made food.

Ayurveda classifies diseases into four categories - easily curable (Sukha sadhya), difficult to cure (Krichra sadhya), that can be controlled but not cured (Yapya) and that cannot be cured (Anupakrama). In case of an easily- curable condition, if a medicine prepared using original raw- materials in the right method is administered in the right way, the outcome will never be slow. A compromise on any of these factors compromises the effect of the medicine as well.

### **Ayurveda – Oh It's the herbal thing!!**

Ayurveda is widely considered as herbal medicine. This is, however, not true since in many cases animal products and minerals are also used along with herbs. The animal products include honey, milk and milk products, meat of animals, urine of animals, horns of deer, elephant tusk, gall stones of cow, shells of marine organisms like conch shell etc. The mineral medicine category include metals like mercury, gold, silver, cop-



per, iron, lead, tin, zinc and more than thirty minerals. The mineral medicines are required in very small dose, are palatable and more potent when compared to herbal medicine.

### **Ayurvedic medicines- "safe and secure drugs"**

Ayurvedic medicines are widely misused and problems pertaining to self medication are widespread. The adverse effects and contra-indications of Ayurvedic medicines are very well-explained in the classical literature of Ayurveda. Some medicines used in Ayurveda are highly toxic and its use is advised only for a very short duration and that too in a very small dosage. It includes plants like *Aconitum ferox* and *Strychnos nux vomica*, animal products like snake venom and minerals like mercury, lead and arsenic compounds. If the preparation and use of the medicine is not done in the correct way, it will result in toxicity. The Ancient Vaidyas were well aware of the toxic nature of these medicines. Toxic effects caused by these medicines, if not used after proper pharmaceutical processing as per Ayurvedic classics (*asuddha seva doshas*), are also described along with its therapeutic use. These facts are rightly implied in the quote "*Matrayaa bhakshitam kshwedam amrutham bhavathi priyae*" (toxin taken in the specific dose acts as nectar). Such medicines must be used only under strict medical supervision.

### **Ayurveda medicines – Oh God it's full of food restrictions**

The dietary restrictions advised by the doctors is a major reason for many people avoiding ayurvedic medicines. The common misconception is that the regulations are for medicines. This leads to instances such as people stopping medicines for 2 or 3 days to eat whatever they like. But in reality a majority of the dietary regulations advised by the doctor are not for the medicine, but for the disease. Only highly-potent drugs that have some sort of toxicity need dietary restrictions for medicines. All of us are familiar with the saying "What we eat is what we are". As per the concepts of Ayurveda, certain dietary factors that support the manifestation of diseases must be avoided irrespective of medications.

Another important aspect of Ayurvedic treatment is protecting the digestive capacity (*Jathara agni*). The first thing that a physician does while examining a patient is to evaluate digestive capacity. When digestion is weak, which is often the case, consumption of anything that is difficult to digest must be avoided, the failure of which makes the patient weak. If digestion becomes normal, all such dietary regulations can be avoided.

### **Ayurveda – Become Veggie???**

Ayurveda never preaches vegetarianism. The ancient classics of Ayurveda such as *Charaka Samhita* give detailed explanation about use of non-vegetarian diet. It includes fish, meat of birds and animals, and eggs



of different birds. It is considered as the best diet for strengthening the body. Different types of non-vegetarian food are indicated in different conditions. Beef is considered inferior among meat category and among fishes, prawns are considered inferior. But even these two are suggested in certain diseased conditions.

### **Why go for surgery, go for Ayurveda**

There is a common impression that Ayurveda is devoid of surgical procedures and in a few conditions surgery can be avoided by Ayurvedic treatment. But it is not always possible. If an Ayurveda Physician advises the patient to go for a surgery, many people consider it as a failure of Ayurveda treatment. Ayurveda also mentions diseases where surgery is necessary. As of now only a few surgical procedures are practiced by Ayurvedic surgeons. Acharya Susruta is considered as the father of Surgery and *Susrutha Samhitha* mainly deals with surgical treatment. Susruta pioneered cadaveric dissection for the study of anatomy. *Shalyatantra* is the branch of Ayurveda that deals with surgery and it enjoyed high prestige up to the time of Jeevaka, the personal Physician of Buddha. But surgery lost this prime status within a few centuries after the Buddha. Shortly after the period of Vagbhata, the author of *Ashtanga Hridaya*, the use of Lancet was discouraged and anatomy and surgery fell into disuse and became lost sciences. During this period the very touch of a corpse was thought to bring contamination to sacred persons. Many surgical procedures disappeared from the mainstream of Ayurvedic practice



and survived in the hands of traditional practitioners.

Rhinoplasty (nose repair surgery) pioneered by Susrutha, which later won international recognition, is India's contribution to Plastic surgery. Two British Surgeons James Findlay and Thomas Cruso in 1794 witnessed the nose repair surgery of a Maharashtra bullock- cart driver who served in the English Army. This caught the attention of Joseph Corpue, FRCS, an English Surgeon in London, and inspired him to perform a rhinoplasty for the first time in Europe.

### **Ayurveda – what's your say on Alcohol?**

Alcohol has been part of human race since time immemorial. Use of alcohol in small quantities is considered beneficial for health like nectar and if in excess quantities it acts like poison. It is thus clear that misuse of alcohol is harmful to health. Three main types of alcoholic preparations are explained in Ayurvedic classics - those prepared from grains, grapes and sugar. The preparations are modified according to the disease condition to benefit the patient. The fermented alcoholic products like arishtas and aasavas are used as medicines. It is prepared out of plants having medicinal properties.

### **Panchakarma - delivered in packages...**

Now-a-days panchakarma therapies are available in many centers. Even the word panchakarma is not understood in the correct sense. Mainly procedures that include oil application and sudation processes are done under the label of panchakarma. In reality, these are only the poorva karmas (preceding process) of panchakarma. Ayurvedic treatment can be broadly divided into Samana Chikitsa (pacifying therapies) and Sodhana Chikitsa (elimination therapies). The elimination therapies are intended to flush out the toxins from the body. Panchakarma is done for elimination therapy. "Panchakarma" means five processes – Vamana (Emesis), Virechana (Purgation), Nasya (Nasal administration of medicine), Sneha vasthi (Enema with oil), Kashaya Vasthi (Enema with decoction and its add-ons). It must be accompanied by certain preceding and succeeding processes. The preceding processes involve intake of Ghee and oil application and sudation processes. This is done to facilitate the elimination of toxins when panchakarma is done. If these treatments alone are done without proper panchakarma therapies, it will do more harm than good.



The duration and the type of panchakarma treatment needed depend upon the condition of the patient and can be decided only after proper evaluation of the patient. Hence it can never be given as pre fixed packages.

To conclude, in the 21st century when the scope of Ayurveda is again on the rise, we people at the cradle of Ayurveda has a lot of doubts and disbelief towards our traditional system of medicine. All these doubts are nothing but the creation of our own. You may blame the policies of the government, the colonial rule and so many to name, but the true culprits are we ourselves who never tried to rediscover or reinvent the time- tested truths revealed in Ayurveda.

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## Interview (Part 2) with

Dr. Antonio Morandi, MD, PhD



Dr. Antonio Morandi, MD, PhD, was born in Florence, Italy. He studied Medicine and Surgery at the University of Florence, specialized in Neurology and Neuropathology. He then continued as a researcher in Cleveland Ohio, USA working on "Aging changes in neuronal structure and function and synaptosomes and axons". He returned to Italy to Fida Research Laboratories, Abano Terme in the province of Padua, heading their research laboratory of neuropathology of aging and later the Research and Project Management. He is also an Ayurveda Vaidya (Ayurveda Academy, Pune, India, and Joytina International College of Ayurveda). He is the President, CEO and Founder of Ayurvedic Point srl ([www.ayurvedicpoint.it/](http://www.ayurvedicpoint.it/)), Milan, a leading institution in Italy and Europe for therapy, research and education in Ayurveda.. Dr. Morandi is also Founder President of the Italian Scientific Society for Ayurvedic Medicine (S.S.I.M.A.), an association of medical doctors practicing Ayurveda, which is a founding member of the Italian Permanent Consensus Committee on Non Conventional Medicines. He is also the Ayurveda Project Leader for the European Research Group on Metaphysical Medicine.

In 2003 he was awarded the honorary doctorate, 'Ayurveda Acharya' by the Ayurvedic Institute Ashtavaidyan Thaikattu Mooss, Kerala, India. He is also Director and Professor of Ayurveda section at the Post Doctoral specialization course in "Health Sociology and Non Conventional Medicine", University of Bologna, Italy, and has been called to teach Ayurveda in several Italian and foreign Universities.

By Jayadevan A.P, (Coordinating Editor)

# Ayurveda

## <to bind East with the West

**Even today, many are there who still believe that Ayurveda is very primitive and not at all a science. What do you think in this regard?**

It is being said so just because of ignorance, it is a big mistake that still persists in the Western world. Actually, it is not a mistake, it is a confusion. A confusion between what is culture and what is technology. You may have technology which has culture, but you cannot have technology without culture. And you may have culture alone. But if you confuse the technology with the culture you will have big problems.

For example, suppose you have a television - it is technology. But without culture, you don't know what to do exactly with that television. And if you have a wrong culture, you will use it wrongly, it will be harmful. So culture is a very basic awareness. You can use any tool both positively and negatively.

It does not mean that one is inferior to other or vice versa. We should have an advanced perspective. See nature, it is not 'technological' and we cannot live without it. We need both culture and technology and that which brings a confusion here is the modern man's ego. Modern man thinks that he can control nature with his technology. He tries to decide what nature should do. It is not the way. We need culture and technology in tune with nature. We need an opening of minds and also a humanitarian approach to bridge both streams, Eastern and Western or Modern and ancient wisdom.

Moreover, Ayurveda is a time- tested health- care science, which had originated since time immemorial and is still alive as it was many thousands of years back.

Besides all these technical advancements, we have a lot many diseases which are still remaining unmanageable.

You know, the basis of disease management is prevention. But in modern bio-medicine, prevention is mistaken with early diagnosis. Prevention is, to have a behavior in such a way that I prevent the diseases with my life-style. The concept of dinacharya in Ayurveda is the basic scientific form of prevention. Medicines should be the last choice.

For an analysis or diagnosis, Modern science has its own methodologies and parameters. Is it possible to use the same parameters in the case of Ayurveda?

The parameters in Modern science are limited in some specific areas. For example, we have various sections of science like Botany, Biology,



## Interview



Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Psychology etc., which are all different vast areas. Inside these, we have smaller sub-areas and all these divisions ensure more control over the subjects. Each of these areas are being developed on certain parameters. The funny thing is that nature needs no such divisions. Nature is there as a whole, we have created all such divisions.

We can try to find a new language to solve this question, to develop a new relationship between these different points of view. We can develop new parameters, but with a scientific and systematic approach, because we are trying to analyze a very complex system, nature. To analyze it, we need an all-inclusive methodology, we need a new approach other than the reductionist approach of modern science.

Think of a flock of birds flying, which is a complex system. You cannot ask a single bird where it is flying to or why it is doing so. The single bird is part of the whole and most of its actions depend upon the flock's movements, which depends on the overall needs of the community. There is a community 'dharma' among these birds.

Our body is also like this - a flock of billions of cells with various functions! As the flock of birds get adapted to various situations, the cells in our body also try to be fine-tuned with surroundings. The secret of healing lies in this ability to adapt to various situations.

While prescribing a paracetamol tablet, a modern physician may be able to explain well about the impacts due to the intake of that medicine inside the body. Is this applicable in case of an Ayurvedic physician?

This is not so true. While prescribing a paracetamol, the physician understands it as an analgesic or antipyretic. But this is just one view; along with its expected effects,

it bears some side-effects too. That also is a mistaken term: these are not just 'side-effects', but 'other effects', than what it is intended for.

But the most important thing is that if you analyze paracetamol from an Ayurvedic perspective, you may derive its effects and other effects you may have, even without any animal experiments.

In Italy, in our college- Ayurveda Point- we have one branch of study for the doctors that deals with how to learn to use chemical drugs in an Ayurvedic fashion. They searched for the Guna, rasa, virya, vipaaka, prabhava etc. of a chemical drug, and try to use those as Ayurvedic drugs, even though they are chemicals. As per the principles of Ayurveda, a chemical is also being made up of Panchamahabhutas. Chemicals also should have various own qualities (gunas) like rasa, veerya and vipaka etc. If we think this way, we can understand that anything can be a medicine, if used wisely. You don't need to throw away chemicals if you have only those with you. You can use it as medicine, but only after knowing all about its gunas (qualities). You have been made up of elements, you can use elements to heal you. If you have nothing other than chemicals, if you want to move forth, you should find a way to use chemicals in a most naturally-optimized fashion.

So what should be the role of Indian Ayurvedic community in this scenario?

Well, what I have to suggest is, what India has to export right now is not herbs or medicines but the logic - the science - to understand and analyze a herb or any such usable substance from an Ayurvedic point of view, in order to find its medicinal values. There are different elements and different combinations. Ayurveda has a specific approach towards elements. It teaches us about the qualities of various substances and also about





**Global Family...** With Ashtavaidyan Dr. Narayanan Nambi, students and family



how to use these qualities. This should be conveyed to the West. This is very important. Because this would spread the original Vedic thinking all over the world. I think the future of Ayurveda lies here - trying to convey it's all- inclusive, holistic logic in such a way that can be understood by modern medicine without using its reductionist tool. Otherwise they won't understand it.

Every year I send our students to India to have a direct touch with this approach. It is not only for learning some special techniques. Ashtavaidya Dr. Narayanan Nambi and his family supports us in this regard, and his family is home for us. Actually, we are trying to understand a different way to live in this world with different logic.

Yes, in India, there are Six darshanas (aastika), all explain the same world but with different views and still they stand mutually complementary. It is a very wrong idea that these darshanas are all contradictory to each other, or fighting against each other. Darshanas show us a world which is all -inclusive. Following this wisdom will definitely expand your heart and thought.

What is the current status of Ayurveda practice in your country?

In Italy, As a doctor, I can practice Ayurveda. That means you have to be a medical doctor prior to getting into the practice of Ayurveda. But in case of therapists there are some difficulties. It still is not a recognized profession there, but we are on the way to achieving this. And you won't get facilities like insurance etc. But the attitude of Italians towards Ayurveda is very positive.

And some companies are here, manufacturing good- quality Ayurvedic medicines with Italian herbs. They follow the Ayurveda logic and they are trying to develop more medicines.

How do you identify the various 'Ayurvedic'qualities of Italian herbs?

Well, we study about the herbs, try to understand their qualities viz. rasa, veerya, vipaka, karma etc., the Ayurvedic way. Actually, we also have a great legacy of ancient wisdom



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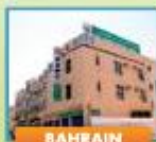
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which was being recorded in ancient texts like 'Materia Medica', the most important one, with a lot of commentaries. It was written by the Ancient Greek physician Pedanius Dioscorides in the first century AD.

The ancients, both Greeks and Indians, used similar logic for analyzing the properties of plants. Both schools were based on the theory of great elements. So we have those ancient information with us which is very much useful in our latest studies. We are using all available information both ancient and modern, to verify facts, to develop a proper database to move it further, towards an appropriate localization of Ayurvedic wisdom in Italy.

I hope studies like this will continue to happen all over the world, and will bring forth a better, nature-centric healthcare system for the betterment of all mankind.



With Ashta Vaidyan Dr. Narayanan Nambi





There should be some factors in the surroundings that make substances audible, tactile, visible, tastable and smelled. These factors are considered to be the Five Elements or Five Mahabhuthas, responsible for the above properties of substances.



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**We have a hunger of the mind which asks for knowledge of all around us, and the more we gain, the more is our desire; the more we see, the more we are capable of seeing.**

- Maria Mitchell (American Astronomer)

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The focus of this article will be to give an idea on the working principle of Ayurveda and make the reader understand what are Panchamahabhutas (Five great elements) and how we apply this theory in Ayurveda.

**Knowledge and means to attain knowledge:**

The obtained information analyzed and applied skillfully for a purpose is called Knowledge. Information is the collection of data from our surroundings or environment, and how do we get information? Or what is the way to understand the environment? What are the tools needed to collect information from the environment.

The tools for understanding the environment or gathering of information from the environment are the 5 senses. We see, hear, touch, taste, and smell, to get information from the environment. Do we have another choice? No, we have our 5 senses as our tools to gather information. These five senses are known as the 5 Indriyas .

- 1 Shravana Indriya (Ears) to perceive information by hearing
- 2 Sparshana Indriya(Skin) to perceive information by touching

3 Darshana Indriya(Eyes) to perceive information by seeing

4 Rasana Indriya(Tongue) to perceive information by taste

5 Ghrana Indriya(Nose) to perceive information by smell

The information that we receive through this 5 indriyas, we can call direct information . This way of achieving information is known as prathyaksha (Through senses) . This information that we receive from prathyaksha is further analyzed , with the help of manas or mind . This method of analysis and inference is anumana . So the 5 indriyas are the means to achieve prathyaksha knowledge, and Manas is responsible to achieve anumana knowledge. Therefore manas is considered the sixth indriya .

In summary, I say that the information is available in the environment in the form of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. And means to achieve these information are prathyaksha with 5 indriyas and anumana with the 6th indriya manas .

Now the question arises:

What are the factors that are responsible for Sound,



# Analysis of the Panchamahabhutha Theory in Ayurveda



Touch, Sight, Taste and Smell in this area?

There should be some factors in the surroundings that make substances audible, tactile, visible, tastable and smelled. These factors are considered to be the Five elements or Five mahabhuthas, responsible for the above properties of substances.

- 1. Akasha is the factor that makes a matter audible**
- 2. Vayu is the factor that makes a matter tactile**
- 3. Agni is the factor that makes a matter visible**
- 4. Jala is the factor that makes a matter tastable**
- 5. Prithvi is the factor makes a matter smelled**

The emergence of these panchamahabhuthas during the formation of the Universe, as we know from an unknown source (avyaktha) . The formation of the universe is a very vast topic and out of scope for this discussion.



I would not call these panchamahabhuthas as Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth because of the following reason. These mahabhuthas in their subtle form are not visible for the naked eyes and this subtle form is called as nithya rupa and which undergoes different permutation and combinations to form the macroscopic matter called anithya rupa . Anithya rupa can be destroyed and brought back to nithya rupa while nithya rupa is indestructible . Out of the Five mahabhuthas all exist in both forms except akasha. Akasha has only one form and its is nithya rupa. These different mahabhuthas combine together and give rise to different matters. Earth is formed of all elements with dominance in prithvi mahabhutha (it can be considered as anithya rupa of prithvi mahabhutha) , Water is the anithya rupa of jala mahabhutha and so on. Nithya rupa of panchamahabhuthas are in paramanu (atomic) state .

Each paramanu state of mahabhutha contains all the other, they exist in the form of combinations that are known as panchekarana . Each of the five elements is divided into two halves and each half is further split into four parts. The four parts are now filled with other four elements. Akasha paramanu has  $\frac{1}{2}$  Akasha+  $\frac{1}{8}$  prithvi . Likewise, it goes to the other elements. This process is referred to as the panchekarana of subtle elements.

Several permutations and combinations of these Mahabhuthas lead to the formation of all living and non-living things that we perceive around us in this world. This means that all the things around us are made from panchamahabhuthas .

As we know that neurons are the structural and functional unit of the nervous system, these Panchamahabhuthas are the structural and functional unit of all living and non-living things we touch, see, taste, smell and hear.

In short: According to the theory of panchamahabhutha all living and non-living, natural and artificial things in this world are formed from the five elements. Hence the human body is also made up of panchamahabhuthas .

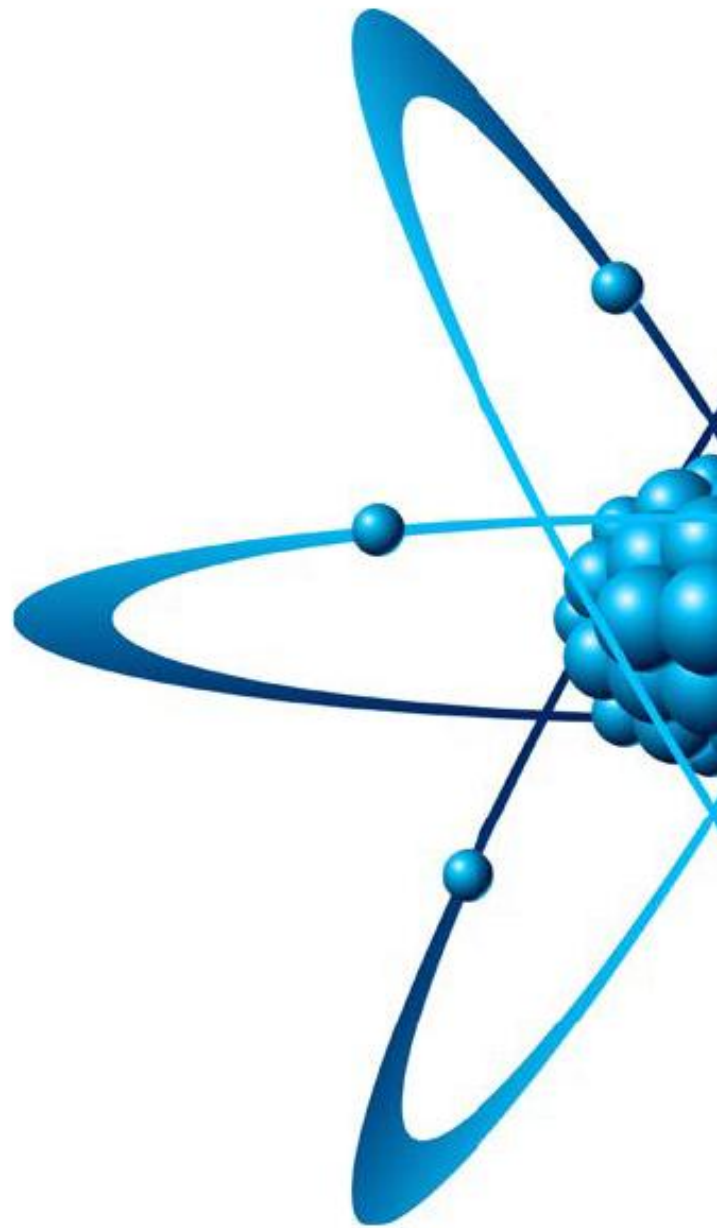
**Panchamahabhutha and Ayurveda:**

Now we know that our body is made like all other substances from panchamahabhutha. Anything made of Panchamahabhutha is called bhouthika - that is, physical. This means that our bhouthika body is nourished by the bhouthika food. Our body as well as the food or drugs that we take are made of panchamahabhuthas. Improper intake of food or improper behaviors can cause disturbances in mahabhuthas and cause disease in bhouthika body. Then we use the corresponding bhouthika drugs to compensate for the bhouthika body.

When a person is sick, then we should analyze what the problem is in his panchamahabhuthas , then we should give him the medicine that contains the right amount of panchamahabhuthas for his present condition.

The next question that should be considered:

How can we know that there is an imbalance of mahabhuthas in the body?



Moreover, how can we analyze the mahabhuthas in a drug or a plant?

Five bhuthas (elements) can be categorized in to 3, in order to study and analyze the function of the body.

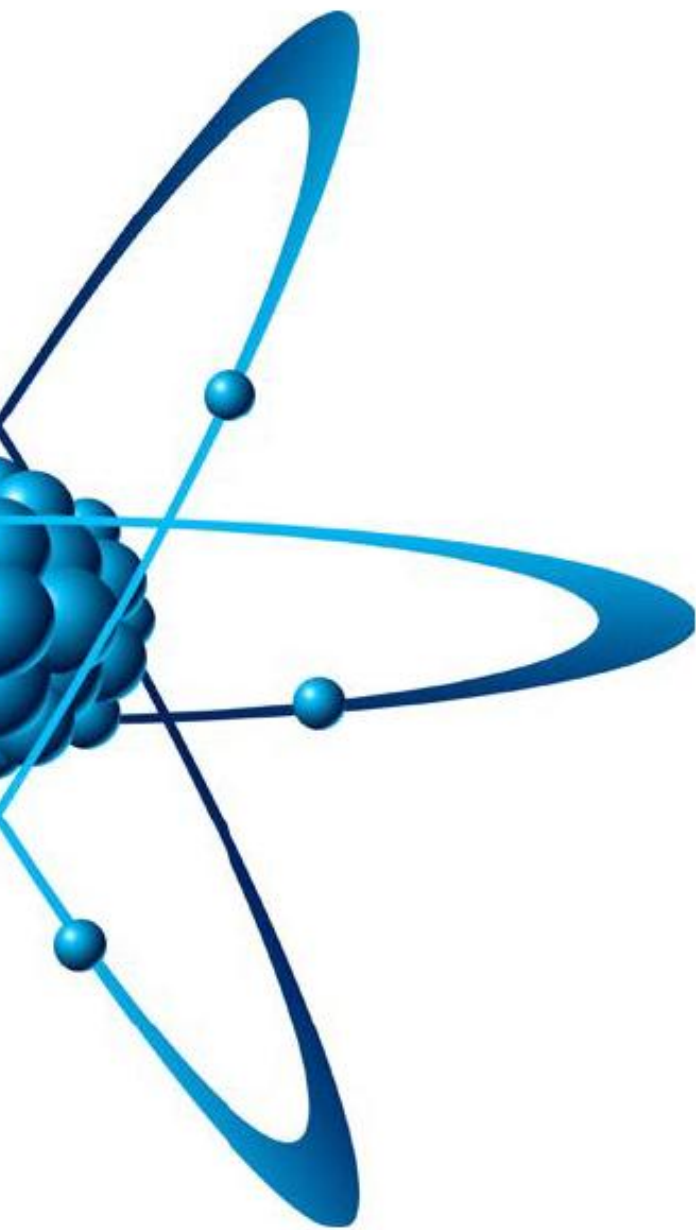
Akasha + Vayu = Vata

Agni = Pitta

Jala + Prithvi = Kapha

These three are considered the physiological aspect of the human body and are known as doshas , which means three doshas. The Vata dosha is : akasha and vayu are predominant. If there is a quantitative and qualitative increase in the akasha and vayu - mahabhuthas in a specific body , then Vata dosha is aggravated in this body, which





in turn shows the signs of increased Vata. And decrease in the same mahabhuthas tends to reduce Vata . The same principle is valid for Pitta and Kapha.

Therefore, it's our goal to find the right medicine or treatment that can bring this into balance. For example, in the increase of Vata we should find a drug with the dominance of jala , prithvi or agni or their combination. We should not take those drugs with predominance in akasha and vayu , because Vata is aggravated by the increase in akasha and vayu .

How can we know the existence of bhuthas in a particular plant? To get to know the effect of a plant or a medicine, In Ayurveda we analyze the 4 main characteristics of plants.

Drugs are analyzed by the following properties.

Rasa----- taste

Veerya----- potency

Vipaka ----- property after digestion

Prabhava----- Special property

There are six types of Rasas , and each has its predominant mahabhutha .

Madhura -----sweet----- Prithvi + Jala

Amla----- sour----- Agni+ Prithvi

Lavana----- salty----- Jala + Agni

Tiktha----- bitter----- Akasha + Vayu

Katu----- pungent----- Agni+ Vayu

Kashaya----- astringent ---Prithvi + Vayu

From the above table we see that the first three rasa are formed from the dominance of two bhuthas of Prithvi , Jala or Agni . Therefore, these rasas have the ability to reduce the enhanced Vata . There are plants with madhura , amla or lavana rasa , which are good medicines for Vata problems. This is just the basic idea of the principle of treatment in Ayurveda. Treatment relies on a lot more other factors.

Basic principle in therapy :

Disharmony in mahabhuthas can be understood by the imbalance in tridoshas and the appropriate drug for therapy (to attain the equilibrium) is selected according to the properties like rasa.

Example :

Madhura rasa made of prithvi and jala bhutha

1. Decreases the aggravated Vata ( Akasha and Vayu predominant)
2. Decreases the aggravated Pitta (Agni predominant)
3. Aggravates Kapha (Prithvi and Jala predominant)

The above mentioned is only one aspect of Ayurveda Treatment principles. Lots of other things like dhathus, malas, agni, srothas etc are to be considered to decide the shodhana or shamana Treatment.

To conclude:

According to Aurveda, equilibrium of doshas, dhathus, mala and agni along with intact soul, sense organs and mind is said to be health.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity ..WHO





- Dr. K. Muraleedharan Pillai M.D.(Ay)

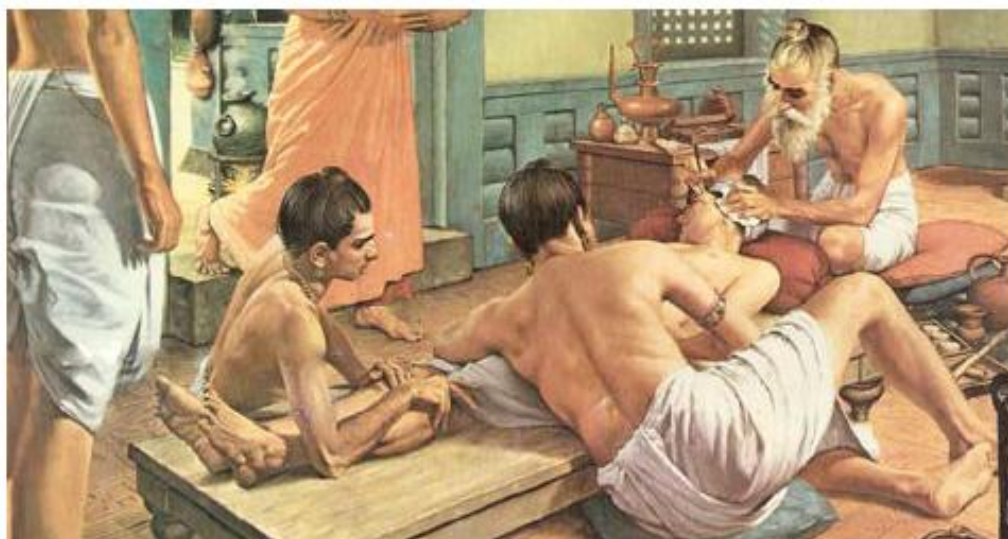
Prof. Dr.K. Muraleedharan Pillai MD (Ay), a well-known Ayurvedic scholar and researcher from South Kerala, has been in pursuit of pure Ayurveda for the last 40 years. He has written numerous books on Ayurveda for the common people to give awareness of Ayurveda and has published a number of articles in various national and international medical journals and magazines in Malayalam and English. He was given the State Dhanwantari Award in 2012 for his invaluable contributions towards teaching, treatment and propagating Authentic Ayurveda. He had also received the prestigious Padmasree Raghavan Thirumulpad award, Dr. N.V.K. Warriar award, Dr. K.R.R.Nampoothiri award, Govt. Medical Officers award and Kerala Govt. Specialist Medical Officers award for his better services in the field of Ayurveda. He is a member of the Board of Studies in Ayurveda of Kerala Health University and is currently the Principal and the Head of Department of the Kayachikitsa in Vishnu Ayurveda College, Shoranur, Kerala.



The existence of Ayurveda has been recognized since time immemorial. Vivid descriptions about this form of medicine are seen in Rig Veda and Atharva Veda. It is believed that Lord Brahma was the originator of Ayurveda, the Science of Life, which had two different schools i.e. the Atreya School, which deals with Kayachikitsa (General Medicine) and the Dhanwantari School, which deals with Shalya (surgery). Susruta was

regarded as one of the most intelligent disciples of Divodas Dhanwantari, therefore, he preached his scientific knowledge of Shalya to his disciples, particularly addressing to Susruta. There is difference of opinion among scholars about the age in which Susruta lived. Some scholars put him quite early in BC while others take him in the Medical Period. The most outstanding perfor-





# Contributions of Susruta, the Father of Indian Surgery

mances of Indian surgery, however, were in the domains of transplantation of organs, plastic surgery, Lithotomy, Laparotomy etc.

There had been several instances where the severed parts of the body were transplanted with great success. Implantation of artificial metal leg, restoration of broken teeth, eye-enucleating and corneal grafting to restore vision etc. were carried out by Indian surgeons in the past. Moreover, plastic surgery was on high peak during the ancient era. Susruta, the father of Indian surgery, has described the scientific technique of Rhinoplasty and Otoplasty (repairing of severed nose and lobes of the ear) in his Treatise of Susruta Samhita. It is evidently true that

modern surgery throughout the world has got inspiration from the ancient surgery of Susruta and it has been quoted by Hershberg of Germany that 'our entire knowledge of plastic surgery took a new turn when these surgical techniques of India became known to us.'

However it indicates that Indian surgeons were highly trained and proficient in performing the major and complicated surgeries. In brief, these contributions by Susruta have inspired the scientists of the 20th century to realise the significance of transplantation as well as plastic surgery practices in the 6th century BC or even before.

Thus the objective and its importance to deal with the





present object is to trace the most valuable hidden treasures of surgery practised in the past. An attempt will also be made to investigate the valuable materials of immense importance pertaining to surgical literature available in Vedic and Post- Vedic periods.

Indians believe the science of Indian medicine to be divine as Lord Brahma was the patron of the leading art, Ayurveda.

It has always been a matter of speculation how the ancient surgeons ever carried out major surgeries successfully in the absence of anaesthesia, haemostatics, antiseptics and antibiotics. However, knowledge of anatomy was requisite to Indian surgeons as evidenced by the concept of Marmas (Vital points) 107 in number mentioned by Susruta based on regional anatomy so critical to any intelligent surgeon and this needs further exploration. Indian surgeons were quite aware of

the infections following surgical operations and they accorded top priority to prevent infections in such cases. It was surprising how they used to prevent and manage the infection in the absence of antiseptics and antibiotics. It is to be further highlighted and explored with regard to the ways and means adopted by the surgeons in the old days of Susruta.

Shalya is the name applied to the art of surgery in Ayurveda. The foreign bodies of all kinds were denoted 'shalya'. But it specially refers to the arrow which was the commonest and the most dangerous foreign body causing wounds and requiring immediate surgical interference during the Aryan invaders. Thus in Rig Veda, amputation of legs and fitting with artificial metal limbs, extraction of arrow from the wounds, corneal grafting to restore vision etc. have been elaborately described.

The clinical approach and major surgical operations of certain

serious abdominal diseases i.e. peptic ulcers, perforations etc. mentioned by Susruta have provided a new light to modern surgery. Moreover, Susruta has described various means of blood-letting (Rakta Moksha) employing several methods for the treatment of critical diseases, i.e. blood pressure, sciatica and several nervous disorders. It was most common during the ancient era and more than 50% of the diseases were cured by Siravedha (venesection), cupping and application of leeches which have been quoted in the ancient book of surgery- Susruta Samhita.

Similarly, Agnikarma (cauterisation) was considered even more efficacious than caustic. It was mostly employed to eradicate tumors, fistula, haemorrhoids, elephantiasis and several nervous disorders and requires further explanation in view of modern light.

The most exciting surgery of transplantation of organs was highly prevalent and practised in the past. Transplantation of head, kidney and other vital organs were successfully carried out in the past by Indian surgeons, Aswini brothers and others. However, the ancient technique, methodology and immune-suppressive agents to prevent the rejection of transplanted organs etc. need further explanation and investigation available in the Vedic and Post- Vedic periods in Sutra form.

In addition to the above noted details, the scientific approach to perform Rhinoplasty and Otoplasty in the 6th century BC will be explored and highlighted considering the significance and importance of the subject in modern perspective.

Susruta has emphasised on the clinical application of Kshara- Sutra in patients suffering from fistula, haemorrhoids with great success. Even at present, alkali prepared threads (Kshara Sutra) are widely used by the Indian surgeons. The details of the technique as well as the scientific approach need to be studied further as it is less time consuming compared to modern surgery.

The fundamental concepts and contribution of Susruta on the management of fractures and dislocations have covered all aspects in such a scientific way that even modern surgery has adopted almost the same principles without much alteration. It does indicate that Indian surgeons in the past had supremacy pertaining to orthopaedic surgery. The emphasis will be given on most of the outstanding contributions of Susruta on ancient surgery practised in the past.

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KTM 2014 Management Committee members with Kerala Tourism Minister Mr. A. P. Anil Kumar after KTM press meet

Photo courtesy: Jeneesh Jaleel: www.facebook.com/jeneesh

**KTM 2014**, the 8th edition of the Kerala Travel Mart is scheduled to take place on 18th, 19th and 20th of September, 2014 at Samudrika Convention Centre, Cochin Port Trust, Willingdon Island, Kochi. It is the only Travel Mart in the country that showcases a single destination - Kerala.

The Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala partners with the Kerala Travel Mart Society is hosting this mega event which brings together the business entrepreneurs behind the tourism products and services of Kerala on a single platform. It is perhaps the largest gathering in the tourism Industry of Kerala that facilitates the meeting and interaction of the Buyers, Sellers and the Media. Tour Operators, Hotels, Resorts, Homestays, Houseboats, Ayurveda Resorts, cultural art centres and many others will showcase their products at the Mart.

Since its inception, there has been an overwhelming response from the national and international Buyers which has reflected in the steady escalation in the variety of products and in the number of participants both Buyers and Sellers. KTM 2012 was attended by more than 1250 Buyers.

KTM (Kerala Travel Mart) is held once in two years during September and the stupendous success of each Mart has inspired the KTM Society to innovate, think out-of-the-box and take each Mart to the next level. KTM 2014 will reach out to Buyers from new marketys like Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sweden and USA. KTM 2014 will focus on raising their quality too.

The Mart will highlight innovative tourism products like Village lifeexperience, culture tours and destination wedding themes. A big turnout of MICE Operators, Wellness and Adventure Tour operators is expected at KTM 2014.

**ASSOCHAM to set up an "India Pavillion" in the Ayurveda Expo 2014 at City Centre, the World Heritage City, Kandy, Srilanka during 22-24 May, 2014.**



Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) is mounting a delegation of 40 companies to participate at Ayurveda Expo 2014 at City Centre, the World Heritage City, Kandy, Srilanka during 22-24 May, 2014. This event is jointly organized by the Department of Ayurveda, Central Province and the Central Provincial Council, Government of Sri Lanka.

ASSOCHAM is India's premier apex chamber, established in 1920, covers a membership of over 3.5 Lakhs companies and professionals across the country with 250 regional chambers are associated with it. The chamber is well recognized, nationally and internationally as a knowledge chamber. ASSOCHAM has been organizing seminars, conferences, exhibitions in India & abroad.

The theme of this event is "Traditional System of Medicine for Health & Wealth". This is a prestigious focused event in which more than 20 overseas countries are expected to participate with more than one lakh visitors expected to visit. The event is B2B and retail is also allowed.

The proposed event is on Ayurvedic products, Medicinal Plants & Spices, organic food & beverages, wellness products, personal care items, equipments and astrology and natural healing (yoga, meditation, hydro therapy) etc., offering immense business scope as well as excellent networking opportunities to Indian exhibitors for export marketing and sell their products.



## Cover Story



Dr. Antonio Morandi, MD, PhD, was born in Florence, Italy. He studied Medicine and Surgery at the University of Florence, specialized in Neurology and Neuropathology. He then continued as a researcher in Cleveland Ohio, USA working on "Aging changes in neuronal structure and function and synaptosomes and axons". He returned to Italy to Fida Research Laboratories, Abano Terme in the province of Padua, heading their research laboratory of neuropathology of aging and later the Research and Project Management.

He is also an Ayurveda Vaidya (Ayurveda Academy, Pune, India, and Joytinat International College of Ayurveda). He is the President, CEO and Founder of Ayurvedic Point srl ([www.ayurvedicpoint.it/](http://www.ayurvedicpoint.it/)), Milan, a leading institution in Italy and Europe for therapy, research and education in Ayurveda.. Dr. Morandi is also Founder President of the Italian Scientific Society for Ayurvedic Medicine (S.S.I.M.A.), an association of medical doctors practicing Ayurveda, which is a founding member of the Italian Permanent Consensus Committee on Non Conventional Medicines.

He is also the Ayurveda Project Leader for the European Research Group on Metaphysical Medicine.

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# General considerations on Ayurveda and Neuro-degenerative Diseases

— Antonio Morandi

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A degenerative disease is a condition in which biological tissues progressively deteriorate leading to a loss of function. The reasons of degeneration are usually unknown but the tissue alterations can be generally described as a disruption of the regularity of the cellular and inter-cellular patterns as well as the formation of erroneously-folded proteins which accumulate into insoluble aggregates. Abnormal protein aggregations represent a unifying biochemical and histomorphological hallmark of neuro-degenerative disease.

Neuro-degenerative diseases are unceasingly progressive disorders of the nervous system characterized by cognitive, motor, and/or behavioral dysfunction. Diseases like Alzheimer's, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Parkinson's, Huntington's, to name a few, present neuro-pathological features which are consistent with the above described disorganization.

As an example, in Alzheimer's disease the main lesions are the amyloid plaques, which are extra-cellular deposition of insoluble material which causes disruption of inter-neuronal communication, and the neuro-fibrillary tangles, which are collapses of the regular cytoskeleton of neurons. This leads to cognitive as well as memory impairment and, in the more advanced states, to muscular atrophy.

The example of Alzheimer's disease can be extended to all the other neuro-degenerative disorders which are also characterized by the disruption of intra-cellular and/or extra-cellular networks with consequent decrease in the related functions.

Moreover, in all the neuro-degenerative diseases, it is found that there is shrinking of the nervous tissue due to neuronal death which, after some time, can be followed by the replacement of a less ordered scar tissue. It can thus be generalized that a neuro-degenerative disease

implies a loss of order, continuity as well as volume, paralleled by an increase in disorder, discontinuity and emptiness. These characteristics are observed also in the process of brain aging. This is the perspective of modern medicine.

The pathological process of neuro-degeneration is not described in classical texts of Ayurveda as it is described by modern medicine, and it is an epistemological error to transfer the modern description to an Ayurvedic context without an in-depth Ayurvedic analysis of the observed features. This is a dangerous trend that is affecting Ayurveda now-a-days and that leads to the usage of Ayurvedic therapies following the symptomatic logic of modern medicine, mainly consisting in the administration of such and such herb for such and such disease. This is not the logic of Ayurveda which, instead, looks to a broader picture of inter-connected events in order to find the samprapti, or the logic underpinning of the dynamic pathway of the disease.

The balance alteration of one Dosha brings to different diseases in relation with the difference in etiological factors. In Charaka Samhita, it is stated that diseases are innumerable in number depending on their distinctive features like signs and symptoms, etiology, site of origin, manifestation etc. In Ayurvedic classical texts, the symptoms of neuro-degenerative diseases are not clumped under the heading of a single disease rather are described as types of Vatavyadhi, meaning disorders related with a derangement of Vata Dosha.

In Ayurveda, the description of the neuro-degenerative disease manifestations are seen as enhancements of the normal process of aging due to unnatural and straining activities and unwholesome as well as contradictory or incompatible food habits.

Aging is a slow and continuous process, which affects





various bodily tissues at different times, including the decline in medha (intellect). According to Ayurveda, the process of brain aging begins in the fourth decade of life, therefore, neuro-degeneration starts as a part of normal phenomena of aging.

Inadequate lifestyle causes alteration of Agni functioning and the consequent formation of ama, which causes effects in the body such as srotorodha (Blockage of body channels), dhatukshaya (tissue loss), ojakshaya (diminution of Ojas or coherence between body constituents), manas dushti (mental as well as sensorial functions disturbances), smritibuddhihrass (Dementia), Vatavyadhi disorders (under which the neurological symptoms are grouped) etc. Conditions like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and similar belongs to the category where rate of neuro-degeneration is disproportionately increased to the chronological age of the individual.

It is then possible on the basis of the Ayurvedic reading of signs and symptoms to correlate the nosological entity of modern medicine with the syndromes described in Ayurveda. However, it will be an error to try to find the exact correspondence since the epistemology is different, moreover the Ayurvedic diagnosis covers a more ample spectrum of conditions than modern medicine diagnosis. This allows Ayurveda to extend the possibility of efficacious treatment also in those pathological conditions which are not well defined according to modern medicine, or to have an extension of the therapeutic effects also in situations considered a co-morbidity by modern medicine where, instead, they appear as a manifestation of dosha derangement in Ayurveda. This is particularly true for neuro-degenerative diseases where the shades of

presentation of diseases are various as also the reactivity of the single individuals.

For example, the exact description of Parkinson's disease, as a single nosological entity, is not available in Ayurvedic classics. We find, instead, clusters of symptoms like kampa (tremor), stambha (rigidity), chestasanga (bradykinesia and akinesia), vakvikriti (disturbance in speech) etc. which can be correlated with Parkinson's disease but they are described in different contexts, as part of Vatika (Vata related) disorders. Some of these symptoms can be found in Parkinson's disease but are not limited to it. According to Ayurveda, Parkinson's disease can be correlated with kampavata, a condition under the heading of

Vatavyadhi.

A neuro-degenerative disorder is much more than what modern medicine describes which is limited to neurological aspects, it encompasses general as well as psychological and behavioral symptoms, it also conditions the perception of reality and consequently the quality of life of the patient.

If we limit to treat the entity identified as Parkinson's disease in modern medicine, we may lose the attention to the whole picture focusing only to what is recognized as Parkinson's, and we may fail in recognizing the etiology as well as the pathogenesis of the disease which depends from multi-factorial and inter-related factors.

In order to attempt an integration of the two knowledge systems which will allow a better management of patients, the interpretation of the description of neuro-degenerative diseases in modern medicine from an Ayurvedic view-point is of utmost importance. However, in the classical texts, only clinical features can be found that can be correlated with the modern medicine descriptions. Keeping this in mind, it is interesting to consider that using the logic of Ayurveda it is possible to extend such correlations also to neuro-pathological and histomorphological evidences. Surprisingly from a modern medicine point of view, but not from an Ayurvedic one, we will find the same Ayurvedic features which accounts for the manifestation of the disease to all levels, clinical, physical, neuro-pathological as well as behavioral and psychological. Comparing the neuro-pathological features of a given neuro-degenerative disease with the logic of Gurvadi Guna (qualities like gurutva etc.) we may observe the prevalence of guna (quality) related to



a Vata derangement, and in particular to a loss of balance between akasha and Vayu mahabhuta, mainly in favor of akasha which accounts for the loss of fluidity of thought, movements, behavior and for the loss of tissues. For example, if we consider the brain of a patient with Alzheimer's disease, at a macroscopic level we find the substitution of snighda (unctuousness), slakshna (smoothness), mridu (softness) and guru (heaviness) guna, characteristic of a healthy brain and typical of Kapha, with ruksha (dryness), khara (roughness), kathina (hardness) and laghu (lightness) which, instead, are typical of Vata. The brain of an Alzheimer's disease patient is, in fact, shrunk, with widespread neuronal tissue loss. The same increase of Vata can be observed at the microscopic level, where there is loss of organization of the cytoskeleton of the neurons and the disruption of neurite networks associated with the irregular deposition of insoluble aggregates of proteins.

This Ayurvedic reading of the neuro-pathological picture is consistent with the observed clinical, physical, neuro-pathological as well as behavioral and psychological symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, which are all related to Vata derangement, such as Memory loss, speech impairment, spatio-temporal disorientation, loss of abstract thinking, urinal and fecal incontinence and so on.

Noteworthy elements, which are determinant in understanding the etiopathogenesis of dementia from an Ayurvedic point of view like, for example, the physiology of manas and buddhi are not even remotely considered in the modern medicinal description of a neuro-degenerative disorders.

Ayurveda readings of Neuro-degenerative disorders may be of great importance for the integration of the two systems of medicine in order to offer an approach that can help modern medicine in the grey area of neuro-degenerative diseases. This approach can offer clues to modern medicine practitioners not only in identifying the pathogenesis, but also for an early detection of the problem and starting of the treatments in order to prevent the progress of the disease.

Moreover, Ayurvedic approach to Dosha derangement instead of symptoms, may offer to modern medicine a perspective of treatment not limited to the specific described symptoms but one that covers the wide spectrum of disturbances affecting a neuro-degenerative disease patient.





## Cover Story



### Dr. Prasanth Raghavan

Dr Prasanth Raghavan is the chief physician of 'Ayush Prana,' the specialty hospital for Multiple Sclerosis started as early as 2002 by the guidance of his renowned Ayurveda practitioner, his father Dr.R. Raghavan. He introduced the specialty therapy for MS while he was practicing in Germany. After 8 years of Ayurveda practice he started MS centers in Ernakulam and Chinnar. Since then numerous patients have undergone the therapy. He travels extensively in Europe and gives seminars on MS and has published several articles in MS-oriented magazines. He is immersed in the work of his book on MS and it is likely to be published in 2016. He is working in cooperation with other Neurologists and Ayurvedic scholars in modulating a scientific study based on his treatment. Ayush Prana, the specialty center for MS, have treatment centers in Illithode (Kerala) and Chinnar for temperature-sensitive patients. Apart from taking care of these treatment centers in Kerala, Dr Prasanth travels to Germany and other European countries for conducting seminars and consultation.

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Do you know which disease will have the longest chronicity,(a life-long disease)? Do you know the disease that takes maximum number of young adults to the wheel chair? And the disease that needs longest years of healthcare and the highest health care expense? Where women are affected 3 times more than men?The answer is Multiple sclerosis (MS). An unknown name until 10 years ago in Asia but in the West MS is immediately understood.

MS starts mostly with milder sensitivity problems like numbness or at times with milder vision disturbances or even temporary total loss of vision. Once the pathology sets in, it starts to progress with time. The annoying symptoms of MS that hinders the quality of life are balancing problem, walking difficulties (requires walking stick, wheel

chair etc) vision loss or cloudiness of vision, bladder difficulties (frequency, incontinence and urgency), cognitive disturbances, coordination problems, spasticity, sexual dysfunction, tremor, ataxia, stiffness of limbs, pain that is non-responsive to analgesics, at times anti-epileptic medicines are used for the same psychological problems like mood swings and depression, etc.

Even though the average age of onset of disease is around 28 years but there are also pediatric cases of MS. In Germany alone about 300 kids are diagnosed every year. And annoyingly the number of cases of MS all over the world is escalating. The incidence in India shows the same record.

The diagnosis of MS is done by MRI and CSF studies (as confirmatory test). Multiple Lesions are pres-



# Management of Multiple Sclerosis

## - The Ayurveda Way

ent in the brain and spinal chord especially in the white matter of the brain and in the cervical region of the spine. MS is interpreted on the basis of activity and size and number of lesions but a more detailed study considering the whole brain will give more information about the disease in the future.

The etiology of MS is unknown. It is prevalent more in Europe, especially Scandinavian countries, Canada and US where there is less availability of Sunlight. In my clinical experience that multiple reasons are to be coined as the cause of MS. Toxic, physical stressors – ingested toxins like heavy metal toxicity and other types of toxins, multiple vaccinations in short duration of time, too much time on computer, familial tendencies, injury to head and spine, mental stressors. Immunological disturbances could be a leading factor for MS. MS could be broadly

considered as a Neuro – psycho- immuno – endocrinological disorder. So a wide spectrum of causes would be eventually considered here.

Even though MS is considered as an auto-immune disease by the allopathic system that Ayurvedic concepts cannot include this as a cause. Auto- immune process might be an effect or an intermediate effect of an ongoing pathology. Most of the allopathic medicines used in the treatment of MS are based on this assumption and I doubt for the same reason that they are unable to bring much results and also with multiple side effects. In conventional medicine there is no known cure or treatment to stop the disease. There are only the so called disease- modifying medicines. Most of the MS medicines are “accidentally proven” for the treatment of MS, what are otherwise used for entirely different diseases. The main medi-

cines that are used in the treatment of Multiple Sclerosis are Interferon (originally used in Hepatitis, in tumor and antiviral) Methoxanthron and alemtuzumab (both used in chemo therapy in leukemia with serious side effects), Amantadine (antiviral and in

Parkinsons disease) cortisone during relapses, copaxone, tsyabri, Fampyra. Unfortunately, they are unable to make any long- time benefits for the patients. In fact, those medicines are having no known benefits that helps the patient even for a few years but having definite side effects what are equally troublesome like the disease itself. The most important and largely sold medicine “interferon” was studied by British Government and did not give an insurance coverage for this expensive medicine since it is not giving any lasting benefit to the patient. In India an injection of



interferon costs you about Rs 5000/-. A single company makes 2000 million dollars for 3 different MS drugs. Interestingly, this is higher than the whole Ayurveda medicine manufactured in India. While MS is found 1 in 150000 people.

There are different types of MS, The relapse and remission form of MS (RRMS), secondary progressive MS (SPMS), Primary progressive MS, Primary Relapsing type of MS (PRMS). Among the different types of MS, Relapsing and remission (RRMS) is having the best prognosis before it changes to SPMS. Primary progressive MS (PPMS) needs to be treated as a different disorder even though the symptoms are similar.

MS patients are largely turning to alternative therapy owing to the reasons mentioned above. Ayurveda had proven effect on this disease.

There is no mention of MS in Ayurveda as a separate disease. Because it is life style form of disease what was recently or noticed in the last one century.

#### **MS differs from other Vata vyadhis in the following aspects-**

- Immune system is directly involved in the disease process. Eg, Infection can worsen MS symptoms.
- Environmental temperature can alter the disease fast. A mild rise in temperature can sometimes influence the disease badly. The extreme case of worsening of condition due to temperature variation is called as Uhthoffs phenomenon in MS.
- The typical form of relapse and remission in a neurological disease is not mentioned in this form.
- Young adults are affected what is also a difference from most degenerative neurological disease.

Vata and Vata - Pitta dosha combination are involved in the pathogenesis of MS and 3 in 5 among the patients belong to this constitution also. The compensatory effect of Kapha to Vata is much reduced in MS. Immune system will get involved in toxic MS and in predominance of Pitta. The involvement of GI system, endocrine system and immune system needs to be treated parallel.

Panchakarma needs to be carefully administered, if at all required. Erratic use of these procedure may



progress the condition and at times harmfully affect the already existing bladder and bowel disturbances. Warm therapies like svedana and pizhichil are mostly avoided. Theekshna dravyas needs to be avoided. Theekshna nasya and vyreechaneeka nasyas could even lead to a relapse. Like Anuthaila Nasya. So altogether we have to reconstruct the recipe of normally- used classical preparations.

MS in the beginning stage is a curable disease if there is no considerable motor deficit or bladder involvement. In the later stages, the treatment can stop the pathology process and can improve the various symptoms of MS.

#### **The Aims of MS therapy :**

Control on the progression of MS : To control the pathological process of MS, so that further deterioration of





**The line of treatment that we follow generally could be:**

- Adhi-Stana Chikitsa (Treating the source of illness): Treating the central nervous system
- Agni Sara Chikitsa (Reorganizing or fine tuning the metabolism): Correcting the digestive fire in a person which improves the cellular metabolism
- Kaya Sattwa (Mind Body Balancing)
- Dathu Shuddhi (Cellular Rejuvenation)
- Palliation of accompanying illness or pathology

**Treatment Methods:**

The Therapy for MS is a system that uses a group of therapies aimed at treating the source of the disease, where palliation of symptoms happens on its own accord. During the treatment period, a patient undergoes various types of therapies involving numerous herbal preparations depending on the constitution, metabolic status, mental state, severity of the disease and symptoms of the patient. The duration of the treatment for a single day is approximately 5 hours.

The main treatments followed at our center are shirovasthi, thaila dhara, kashaya dhara, oushadha -njavara, nasya, basthi or other panchakarma (whenever required). Sometimes certain variations in therapy within the frame work of Ayurvedic principles are adopted. Like in the case of severe balancing deficit that a shirovasthi-shirodhara combination therapy is done.

Therapeutic Yoga postures are taught to patients along with therapy. Patients are given individual yoga postures depending upon the body constitution and symptoms, which helps in improving the coordination, balance, strength in the lower limbs and flexibility. MS specialized physiotherapy is given for individual needs by experts.

The fundamental criteria for success in treating complex disorders in Ayurveda depend on the quality of herbal preparations. Treatment-oriented herbal recipes are to be made, which are not available for sales elsewhere. These herbal preparations are created in limited quantities to ensure the quality.



disease could be stopped.

Stabilization of MS and improvement of symptoms: Stabilization is attained when there is no further progression of the disease. Specific symptoms are considered, like gait disturbance, vision disturbances, bladder problems etc and they will improve during the treatment and these improvements are sustained thereafter.

Then if there is a possible cure from MS could be imagined? I would say it is possible. Cure from MS could happen without leaving any residual symptoms in the initial stages of MS.

A periodic follow up at least for 3 years is an essential component for the success of therapy. The minimum duration of treatment is 50-60 days a year, which has to be repeated for 3 years.





In the treatment of MS that we make custom made oils depending upon the constitution and symptomatology. Most of the herbal oils which are used for MS are custom made and are potentiated several times.

#### Method

The numerous ingredients are used for preparing the Herbal oil for Shirovasthi. Fresh herbal extracts are abundantly used in preparing these oils.

Ingredients: Sesame oil as the base oil. Water: added 4 - 8 times the oil. Herbal paste:  $\frac{1}{4}$  the quantity of oil. Herbal decoction: 2 times that of oil. Fresh Herbal extracts: 2 to 8 times the quantity of oil.

These ingredients are heated on mild fire in a traditional vessel made up of 5 metal alloy (Varp). The contents are slowly stirred continuously during the entire process to ensure the uniform absorption of heat. When the herbal paste has reached a stage, which is called as "mrudu paka" (soft consistency - where there is percolated water molecules), the oil is filtered. This stage stays only for a few minutes in the entire process, so oil needs to be filtered carefully within this short span of time. The

whole process of preparing the oil takes around 12-15 days, during which the temperature of the oil is always kept at 75-80 degree Celsius.

The medicated oils are highly seasoned and concentrated herbal oils. The repeated addition of herbal extract and herbal decoctions (11 times) makes the oil 11 times potentiated than the normal oil.

While treating MS or other complex disorder that we as Ayurveda physicians face multitude of difficulties. Right from propagating a methodology of treatment, making own medicines and to have a strict control on making the medicine and the routine follow up of patients during and after treatment is required. During which time we used to collect data like the MRI and other lab reports for diagnostic, prognostic and for a future research purpose. Separate interviews in the form of testimonials from the patient at different stages of treatment to evaluate improvement. Moreover we did not have a criteria and standards for any of the above mentioned practical things.



**There is no  
running away  
from old age;  
live it out  
wholesomely  
with balanced  
food & exercise**



**By O.J.George**

**Passage through old age and final exit from this world are two distinct realities.**

**Myriad are the explanations given to the state of old age and its harsh truth of suffering. Now-a-days, even in Kerala, India, there are youngsters who do not look after their parents, who had given their everything for bringing the youngsters up.**

**In my neighborhood I am aware of a family, who on constructing a new house, kept their old dilapidated building in the same compound, some sort of a cow-shed, to keep their old parents. They were ashamed of their old parents sitting in front of their new house. Both the parents have passed away without being properly taken care of. What a shame !!!**

**William Shakespeare, in his As You Like It, had described the seven stages of human existence and he had described old age as second childhood.**



**"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and moderna instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything".**

But should we wallow in despondence during old age? Definitely not, for there are ways to live out a more or less comfortable life in the declining years. Food habit and exercise are keys to maintaining good health during the autumn of one's life.

There is nothing like senility if one can entertain good humor, balanced food and a dose of essential exercise.

Regarding intake of food, one should acknowledge the fact that at the age of 39 onwards, old age has set in, even though we consider ourselves as senior citizens only at the age of 60, when shashtiabdapoorthy (attainment of sixty) is observed.

Food provides physical and mental energy and good nourishment is essential during the advanced years. By providing good nourishment one is enabled to keep up youth even by the elderly.

The dictum should be: good, nourishing food keeps the

doctor away.

At the same time there is an overwhelming need for exercise to offset the excess energy absorbed by the body.

The reality is that with the setting in of old age, there is an increasing lethargy for undertaking physical exercise. Wake up from this lethargy and walk off to vibrancy.

At least from the age of 50, one should have a morning walk for at least half an hour. Those who do not do exercise should see to it that they consume food with low calorie value. Otherwise the excess calorie consumed by the person would unsettle health condition considerably.

The excess energy is converted into fat by the body and this condition leads to obesity. Some people complain that body girth increases even as there is small quantity of intake of food. The truth is, it is not the quantity of food that is consumed that is important, but the quality of it. The small quantity of food that is eaten has high calorie





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value, which if not exercised out, converts itself into fat. One vada gives a calorie value of 270, but a dosa provides only a calorie value of 85. Which means eating one vada is equivalent to eating three dosas as far as calorie value is concerned. Without imbibing this fact, we consume three dosas along with one vada.

What happens when we eat a lot of food having high calorie value? We invite in grave diseased conditions with diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

But we don't have to be scared of these diseases provided we resort to a good, balanced protocol of food intake. Grains, grams and beans, leafy varieties and other vegetables having good fibre content should be relished.

This pattern of eating would reduce cholesterol and solve the problem of constipation.

Good quantity of calcium is essential for the old-aged,

otherwise there is the problem of weakening of the bones. It is proved that milk contains good quantity of calcium and so it is better to have a glass of mildly- hot milk before going to bed. This would give the person good sleep and solve the problem of calcium deficiency.

Drinking water profusely before and after food would be fine for the kidneys. Curd-milk, juice of fruits and vegetables would be salubrious.

The role of anti-oxidants in the food array is very important. Food items with anti-oxidants even keep off cancer.

Mangoes, orange, cherry, papaya, strawberry, grapes, onions, carrot, leafy items, mushroom, germinated pulses, and ocean fish are good sources for anti-oxidants.

The anti-oxidants through various sources supply vitamins and minerals enabling the old -aged to glow with good skin and buoyant with vibrancy like a youth.



# When Multiple Sclerosis meets Ayurveda

## What can Ayurveda and concepts from Ayurveda offer multiple sclerosis studies?

The diversity of candidate genes and the diversity of potential environmental triggers and causal factors and reductionist approaches to understand this heterogeneous condition and innumerable limitations all such reductionist approaches poses also points to the need to reframe the MS question. Can a holistic approach, whatever that might be, offer insights and ways ahead? When one considers the possibility of a holistic system like Ayurveda as a possible integrator the first and logical question is whether MS is alluded to and described in Ayurvedic literature? Another important question is whether and how can Ayurveda and its epistemological principles help to reshape one's perspective on the MS problem and point to better ways to frame better research questions (both basic and clinical) and ideally therapy - "Charcot's gauntlet" from more than a century-and-a-half ago. Prof. Vd. Shantala Priyadrshini, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Mysore highlights Charaka

Samhita descriptions which are comparable to the symptoms seen in MS patients. According to Prof. Priyadrshini, Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana alludes to Sarvendriya shunyathwam (where all special senses have lost capacity to work, or they have become hollow or lost functionality) - both gyanendriya (sense organs), karmendriya (motor organs). These descriptions suggesting a vata vyadhi and possibly some kind of avrutha vata vyadhi holds clues. According to Prof. Priyadarshani, a closer study of the texts point to the possibility of "Vvyana avrutha prana", a avrutha vata vyadhi as one that matches best modern day descriptions of Multiple Sclerosis.

Shota of Ayurveda which is approximated to aspects of inflammation is another rich concept which holds innumerable poorly appreciate insights. Vd. P. N. Vinaya, Ayurvedic Physician and Research Scholar, Department of Sanskrit Studies, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad reviews inflammation as alluded to in the samhitas and provides a direction for examining this area further ("Inflammation in

Ayurveda and Modern Medicine" - IAMJ: Volume 1; Issue 4; July-Aug 2013; <http://www.iamj.in/images/upload/iamj38.pdf>). Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 18/6 classifies shota as- ekanga (localised), ardhanga (regional) sarvanga (systemic) - contemporary mechanistic descriptions of inflammation and triggers of inflammation are consistent with these age old classifications. Additionally, Charaka samhita Sutrasthana 18/34 points out a diversity of reasons for shota. Broadly into two nija (innate) and its three forms (vataja, pittaja and kaphaja) and agantuja (external) and its many subtypes (abhighata, krimi, visha, dahana, sagaravata/himavata) are all readily identifiable with the triggers now claimed in contemporary multiple sclerosis scientific literature. Some among the large number of genetic variants that influence susceptibility to multiple sclerosis and alluded to by Compston and Sawcer and colleagues could well be triggers or susceptibilities to shota. Appreciating better the samhita-concept of shota might well have much more to offer.

There may well be other lessons from





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Madan Thangavelu (<http://www.rccm.org.uk/node/4>) is a genome biologist with a diverse academic background and range of research interests. Madan was born in India, home of Ayurvedic and other herbal systems of therapy and medicine. His B.Sc. in Agriculture and M.Sc. in Plant Breeding and Genetics are from the Haryana Agricultural University, India, and PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Cambridge where he also conducted post-doctoral research in human cancer genomics. Current research interests include the development of single DNA molecule and single cell techniques for genome analysis. At the MRC-Laboratory of Molecular Biology and later at the Medical Research Council - Cancer Cell Unit and Department of Oncology, University of Cambridge, Madan developed novel approaches and applications of single DNA molecule and single cell methodology for analysis of genomes and genome dynamics and genome variation. These techniques provide insight into nuclear, mitochondrial and epigenomic plasticity and novel ways to map and describe DNA changes in normal processes like aging and disease including cancer, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic diseases and inherited diseases.

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### **Jean-Martin Charcot and early descriptions of multiple sclerosis**

The early descriptions of Multiple Sclerosis in Western Medical literature are ascribed to Jean-Martin Charcot, Neurologist and Professor of Anatomical Pathology at the historic teaching hospital, Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. His observations were reported in the hospital gazette in 1868 [Charcot JM (1868). "Histologie de la sclérose en plaques". *Gazette des hopitaux, Paris* 41: 554-55.] The historic account of Jean-Martin Charcot work is presented well by Professor Alastair Compston, Department of Clinical Neurosciences, University of Cambridge Clinical School, Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. I quote three excerpts from Compston's essay "Jean-Martin Charcot on 'Sclérose en plaques' (Multiple Sclerosis)" [2005, *Advances in Clinical Neuroscience & Rehabilitation*; 5 (4) - <http://www.acnr.co.uk/pdfs/volume5issue4/v5i4compston.pdf>]:

"... Although not the first to describe multiple sclerosis, Charcot formulated ideas on the clinical features and pathology so effectively that Julius Althaus (1877) suggested naming the condition after him. Charcot first encountered three patients whose symptoms had begun in 1855.

"... He (Charcot) presented three cases to the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux on March 8th 1865 (Vulpian 1866) and published four original papers at around that time (Charcot 1865; 1868a; 1868b; 1868c). But Charcot's observations on sclérose en plaques are best known through his published lectures (Charcot 1872;

1875) and clinical demonstrations (Charcot 1887), the early volumes of his collected works (Charcot 1886) and the English translations of these lectures published by the New Sydenham Society (Charcot 1877). Charcot left a brilliant account of the clinical features, delineating the cerebral, spinal and mixed cerebrospinal forms. He formulated views on the pathogenesis and pathophysiology, provided the first attempts at clinical measurement, and threw down a therapeutic gauntlet to his successors. His clinical descriptions were vivid and, with access to pathological material (Figure 1), he was clearly thinking about disease mechanisms. [<http://www.acnr.co.uk/pdfs/volume5issue4/v5i4compston.pdf>]

"... On treatment, Charcot came straight to the point: "After what precedes, need I detain you long over the question of treatment? The time has not yet come when such a subject can be seriously considered."

Jean-Martin Charcot's lectures on the diseases of the nervous system, 20 lectures on the diseases of the nervous system, delivered at La Salpêtrière (1877) and published by The New Sydenham Society, is available online at <https://archive.org/details/lecturesondiseas02char>

With over a century and half of studies MS continues to challenge the medical community - both clinicians and researchers; Charcot's remarks about treatment remains true in many ways. There is no successful cure for the condition - attempts to cure are additionally plagued by the observed disease heterogeneity.



### Causal agents and triggers of multiple sclerosis

Similar to most complex chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, obesity-metabolic syndrome and more MS, an inflammatory demyelinating disease of the central nervous system, is now recognized as the result of a complex interplay of genes and environmental factors. Food, the environment, fungi, bacteria, viruses & viral infections have all been suggested to contribute to the aetiology of MS. Soil bacteria and the toxin producing bacteria have been considered, for instance, the soil bacterium *Clostridium perfringens* and a toxin (type D epsilon toxin) has been implicated in compromising the integrity of the blood-brain barrier. Esoteric possibilities like time of birth has been raised to support the possibility of maternal effects – the developmental origins of health and disease (<http://www.mrc-leu.soton.ac.uk/dohad/index.asp>) after all is an important and poorly appreciated area in modern medicine. Intestinal microflora, another complex feature which circumscribes the Ayurvedic concepts of mahashrota and sahaja krimis, is one promising avenue with increasing academic consensus and also increasing research evidence. These are just a small number from a very long list of factors offered as triggers of MS.

the Samhitas, if remembered and respected by contemporary MS-researchers, which can inform basic and clinical researchers and also offer new avenues for MS therapy and new strategies for prevention. Individuality and ultimate individuation enshrined in Ayurveda basic tenet of prakarti which says that all individuals are unique and no two individuals are alike or will ever be alike is a good reminder about how to approach the observed heterogeneity. Perhaps one might be able to classify and subtype patients based on Ayurvedic prakarti description as a first step to stratify better the heterogeneity in presentation. Roga pariksha and rogi parkisha offers well systematised scaffolds to understating better the patient and the condition as a continuum of complex processes and not as discrete, unconnected molecular descriptors or entities. Ayurveda's tenets of dinacharya and ritucharya offers another way to reach into this problem. 'ahar, vihar, kala and desa' are other descriptors which can help appreciate pathology and heterogeneity in pathology. Least surprising is that these broad descriptors are consistent with the need for a new framework to explain the many causal triggers now being implicated in MS.

The food-intestinal microbe-immune system-inflammation nexus in multiple sclerosis:

One example of a study that is pointing to food and nutritional factors as the trigger for the spontaneous disease, imbalances in ahara in its widest sense, is from the Max Planck Institute of Neurology in Germany. Emeritus

Professor Hartmut Wekerle, now Hertie Senior Reserach Chair Neurosciences at the Max Planck Institute of Neurology and his team (<http://www.neuro.mpg.de/Wekerle>) are of the opinion that inflammatory brain diseases might have their origins the intestines.

This suggestion is interesting for several reasons – firsts it impinges on the issue of diet (ahara), and then on the role of intestinal microbes (Ayurveda's sahaja krimi) in maintenance of the immune system. This suggestion raises many well posed and resolvable questions. Does diet contribute to spontaneous autoimmune diseases of the central nervous system, and if so how? Answers to some of these questions might also be relevant for appreciating better several other neurodegenerative diseases and many other complex chronic diseases. The group is also asking several other related questions about differences, if any between commensal gut microbes between normal health individuals and MS patients. Are there defined microbial species in the human gut that either is a trigger or a protector from spontaneous disease?

Studies at the Institute for Multiple Sclerosis Research, Department of Neuroimmunology, Gemeinnützige Hertie-Stiftung and University Medical Centre Göttingen, Germany (<http://www.neuroimmunologie.uni-goettingen.de/>) offer early glimpses of how self-reactive T cells enter the central nervous system (CNS) and create an inflammatory milieu that destroys myelin and neurons.; the lung is seen as a niche for myelin-reactive memory T cells on their path to the target tissues to induce the autoimmune disease. This is both surprising and also an opportunity. Besides being an easy route to deliver therapy directly targeting lung-resident cells at a presymptomatic stage, this also points to ways for perhaps some kind of a preventive / prophylactic approach to multiple sclerosis. There might well be a way to monitor early abnormal physiology by monitoring blood cells which might be an indicator of stresses or abnormalities tending towards a lung resident stage of future disease promoting T-cells. This might then be readily approached via immunomodulatory treatments delivered to the lung. The four genes CD6 is involved in T lymphocyte activation, and three others genes (CLEC16A, DAB2 and SDK1) highlighted in the study by Sawcer and Compston and their teams [Exome sequencing in single cells from the cerebrospinal fluid in multiple sclerosis -<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24740369>] might well correspond to one or more of the nija (innate) and its three forms (vatija, pittaja and kaphaja) and perhaps even to some of the agantuja (external) subtypes of sotha. Ayurveda's shad kriyakala in combination with saptadhatu concepts provides elegant frameworks to search for early indicators of biochemical and physiological imbalances and early triggers of future disease.

Integrative approaches for appreciating multiple sclerosis  
Much is being discovered in the world of multiple sclerosis almost on a weekly basis. All these exquisitely powerful, but reductionist descriptions and the allied





implications they are pointing to are exciting – as they are also consistent with the holistic description in Ayurveda. The scientific literature is diverse in its emphasis and interests. The implications in their widest sense are difficult to reconcile and there seems no conceptual system to hold together this diversity in its entirety. Ayurveda offers a system for structuring and piecing together this immensely complex jigsaw of evidence. Ayurveda and its many descriptions derived from the deep descriptors like gunas and panchaboothas and other systems based on qualities and qualitative logic offers the best scaffold not only to bring together all such diversity but also offers new ways for generating new, powerful and easy to test hypotheses. If entities are not the central axiom in the future approach to appreciating MS then perhaps one needs to view this in terms of processes – and errors in processes. Ayurveda's tridosha siddantha has much to offer in this area too.

By combining the wisdom and common-sense in Ayurvedic protocols derived from Vedic principles with the precision and new observational possibilities offered by contemporary molecular biology research tools it should be possible to tackle the MS question more productively at many levels – clinical studies and study design, better and more meaningful research hypotheses and questions, more meaningful research both clinical and basic. Charcot's gauntlet provides an even better reason to consider all ways to approach the MS problems including the integration of knowledge from diverse systems of medicine. For the moment it might seem that Jean-Martin Charcot statements made almost 150-years ago continues to rule "the question of treatment? The time has not yet come when such a subject can be seriously considered." But Ayurvedic wisdom provides a very comprehensive, logic and powerful way ahead in the MS-battle.

**Genomic research on multiple sclerosis :** The International Multiple Sclerosis Genetics Consortium (<https://www.ms-genetics.org/>) with research team and institutions from several countries (including UK, USA, Australia, Germany, Sweden, Italy, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Norway, Japan, Sweden, and Denmark) forms a formidable network of researchers and organisations looking at different aspects of MS. Attempts to provide a genetic perspective and to mine genetic information continue to be inconclusive (<http://omim.org/entry/126200>).

A twin study on monozygotic, discordant twins to assess the magnitude of genetic, epigenetic and transcriptomic differences in CD4+ lymphocytes from MS-affected and unaffected monozygotic twin sibs [Genome, epigenome and RNA sequences of monozygotic twins discordant for multiple sclerosis; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20428171>]. Commentators and others reported in the scientific journal Nature which published this study applauded the effort "It isn't just sequence – they went from sequence to epigenome to expression. That's what really makes [the study] something special." (<http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100428/full/4641259a.html>) However this study too "did not find evidence for genetic, epigenetic or transcriptome differences that explained disease discordance."

A more recent study in the April 2014 issue of the journal Multiple Sclerosis Journal [<http://msj.sagepub.com/>; Exome sequencing in single cells from the cerebrospinal fluid in multiple sclerosis -<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24740369>] Professors Stephen Sawcer and Alastair Compston, and their teams report on a more directed high resolution DNA / genomic approach. The reasons for inconclusive results in this study are further compounded with the technical challenges in the analysis of DNA from single cells / small numbers of cells. This recent study on DNA changes in T-cells from the cerebrospinal fluid is both exciting and also point to the need for other ways to look at the MS problem. The excitement arises from the possibility of using a very small number of well characterised DNA changes, in a small number of well-defined CD4+ lymphocytes as a guide to see when and how these DNA changes arise during the course of the disease process. They studied the spectrum of potential damaging somatic mutations in previously reported multiple sclerosis susceptibility genes. Three mutations each were seen in each of four genes - CD6 is a signalling protein involved in T lymphocyte activation, and three others genes (CLEC16A, DAB2 and SDK1). The three mutations in CD6 alter the amino acid sequence in the cytoplasmic tail of the protein product and the authors claim might alter signal transduction via this surface receptor and signalling protein molecule.





Ayurveda has a major role in preventive heart care. Ayurveda counts heart as one of the three vital organs in the body, the others being head and urinary bladder. According to the tridosha theory, heart is acted upon by vyana vayu, which controls the rhythmic movements and the blood circulation; prana vayu, which gives life; apana vayu, which gives stability.

Heart is at the center of the circulatory system and when functions properly, heart receives and ejects blood (rasa-raktha complex) by continuous contractions and relaxations to perform the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide (preenana) and exchange of water, salts and nutrients between the blood and the surrounding body tissues (jeevana kriyas). Essentially, it keeps our body going. But sometimes it, too, goes wrong.

Heart disease (hrid roga)

Sage Susrutha says suppression of natural urges, indigestion of food of hot potency, consumption of dry, incompatible, uncooked or excessive food and excessive grief, fear or psychological stress will aggravate tridoshas and vitiate the rasa present in the heart and create pain. This condition is known as hrdroga.

**"It is very difficult to diagnose heart disease in the early stages. Even chest pain, the easiest of symptoms to identify, is absent in some patients. Often, the pain starts on the left side, spreads to the arms, neck, jaws and even the upper part of the abdomen".**



# Heart Care in Ayurveda

Translated into more familiar terms, improper diet and stressful lifestyle may lead to the thickening of the arteries (dhamani pratichaya) or hardening of the coronary arteries (dhamani kadhinya). The coronary arteries are the blood vessels which travel through the wall of the heart and nourish the heart muscles. Since the heart muscles spend a huge amount of energy for its own smooth functioning, it needs ceaseless nourishment through a good supply of blood. Impairment of these blood vessels interferes with the blood flow to the heart muscles, resulting in angio-obstruction (Vatha dosha) and angina (ruja).

It is very difficult to diagnose heart disease in the early stages. Even chest pain, the easiest of symptoms to identify, is absent in some patients. Often, the pain starts on the left side, spreads to the arms, neck, jaws and even the upper part of the abdomen. The left shoulder and the left arm are the mostly affected areas. Some of the symptoms are dyspnoea (kashtawasa), fever (jvara), cough (kasa), thirst (trishna), bad taste (asyavairasya), discoloration (vaivarnya), syncope (moorcha), hiccup (hikka), nausea (kapha utklesa) and stupor (pramoha).

## Different types of heart diseases according to Ayurveda

- **Vathaja hrdroga**
- **Pittaja hrdroga**
- **Kaphaja hrdroga**
- **Tridoshaja hrdroga**
- **Krimija hrdroga**

Vathaja Hrdroga (Due to Vatha derangement - the most acute type of heart diseases)

### Symptoms

Constricting or crushing pain radiating across the chest, both arms and shoulders (commonly on left side), moving to the neck, jaw, fingers and epigastric region. The pain is accompanied by profuse sweating, breathlessness and complaints of discomfort or heaviness. According to Sage Susrutha, the patient will feel pain like pricking, twisting, tearing and exploding or splitting.

### Causes

Fasting, consumption of dry or insufficient quantity of food and lack of exercise aggravate Vatha and spread into cardiac region and produce Vatha-related diseases. Pain is the most important symptom in vathaja hrdroga.

### Management

Vathaja hrdroga often requires intense medical intervention. In Ayurveda, samana chikitsa (pacification therapy) and sodhana chikitsa (purification therapy) are prescribed for vathaja hrdroga, depending on the stamina or energy level of the patient. Samana is administered on weak patients  
Pittaja Hrdroga(Due to Pitta derangement)



### Symptoms

Thirst, burning sensation, sucking pain, exhaustion, feeling of hot fumes coming out, fainting, perspiration and dryness of mouth.

### Causes

Intake of heat-producing, sour, salty, alkaline or spicy food, consumption of alcohol and over exposure to Sunlight. These aggravate Pitta in heart, triggering hrdroga.

### Treatments

Virechana (purgation - with Avipathi churna) Generally, Pitta balancing drugs along with external application.

Ksheera vasti (enema). Ksheera vasti is a specific enema with a combination of suitable decoctions with milk, ghee, oil or honey. This therapy pacifies the pitta dosha instantly.

Kaphaja Hrdroga (Due to Kapha derangement)

### Symptoms

Having a feeling of heaviness, running nose/mouth, anorexia/dull digestive fire, stiffness of the body and sweet taste in the mouth.

### Causes

Over-eating, eating of more oily food, lack of exercise, over-enjoyment, over-sleeping

### Treatment

If the patient's energy level is high, internal and external oilation and sudation, followed by vama (emesis) is recommended. Emesis with trivrih lehya or trivrih churnam with honey, a decoction of vacha (*Acorus calamus*) or nimba (bark of neem) is also recommended. Medications like dasamoola hareethaki lehyam, agasya-rasayanam, aswagandharistam, mahadhawantharam gulika are also given.

### Tridoshaja Hrdroga

The causes of vathaja-pithaja-kaphaja hrdroga together lead to tridoshaja hrdroga. It will be treated according to the predominance of the vitiated dosha.

### Krimija Hrdroga

#### Symptoms

Nausea, spitting, pricking pain, colic, drowsiness, anorexia, blue color of eyes and emaciation.

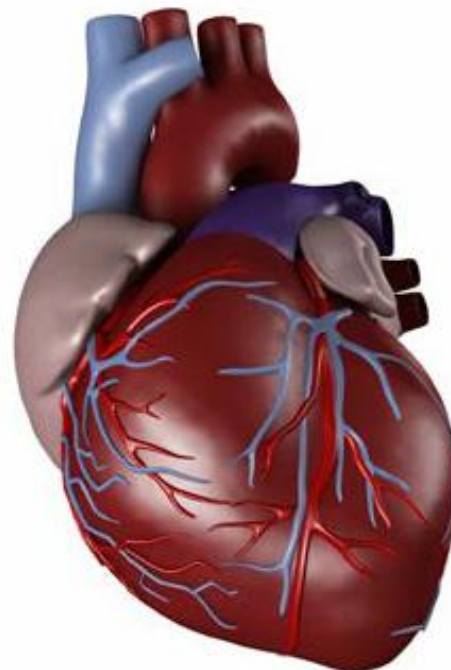
#### Treatment

All the therapies and medication useful for worms are recommended in krimija hrdroga. Sodhana chikitsa (cleanising), langhana (fasting) and pachana (digestive) lines of treatment should be followed.

### High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is the most common risk factor for heart diseases and stroke. Ayurveda suggests lifestyle changes and administration of medicines to tackle it.

**Vatha dosha and rakta dhatu are involved in hyper-tension or high blood pressure (Rakta gata vatha). When vyana vayu, one among the five Vathas, which is responsible for the circulation of blood, gets vitiated, it results in high blood pressure.**



Vatha dosha and rakta dhatu are involved in hyper-tension or high blood pressure (Rakta gata vatha). When vyana vayu, one among the five Vathas, which is responsible for the circulation of blood, gets vitiated, it results in high blood pressure.

When the arteries get thickened due to fat deposits, the tiny blood cells responsible for clotting may collect in clumps on the surface of the deposit and initiate the process of formation of blood clots.



## Symptoms

Ayurveda has classified hypertension into three: Vatha hypertension, Pitta hypertension and Kapha hypertension.

**Vatha hypertension:** Sudden rise and fall in blood pressure with nervous tension, along with strain, anxiety or insomnia.

**Pitta hypertension:** Flushed face, red eyes, severe headache, bleeding from nose, anger, irritation, burning sensation.

**Kapha hypertension:** Obesity, tiredness and edema.

It is not necessary that these symptoms manifest themselves clearly on all occasions. One can have HBP for years without knowing it. During this time, HBP can damage the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, and other parts of the body. Some people learn that they have HBP only after the damage has caused problems, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, or kidney failure—the reason why it is dubbed the silent killer.

## Causes

- Lifestyle habits
- Eating too much sodium (salt), too less potassium
- Excessive consumption of alcohol
- Insufficient physical activity
- Smoking
- Anxiety
- Impatience
- Obesity

Along with these, certain medical problems, such as chronic kidney disease, thyroid disease, and sleep apnea may cause blood pressure to rise. Certain medicines, such as asthma medicines (for example, corticosteroids) and cold-relief products, also may raise blood pressure.

One is more likely to develop HBP if one has pre-hypertension, in which the blood pressure is in the 120–139/80–89 mmHg range.

## Treatment

Ayurveda has a two-pronged formula for bringing hypertension under control. The most important is lifestyle change, which includes a strict control on food. There are medical formulations also for the purpose. The prime target is to eliminate the excess fat in the system and clean the arteries and blood vessels so that the blood pressure returns to below 140/90 mmHg. For adults who have diabetes or chronic kidney disease, the goal is to get and keep blood pressure below 130/80 mmHg.

### Healthy habits help you control HBP:

**A healthy diet:** Adopt a diet which focuses on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other foods that are heart-healthy and lower in sodium (salt). It should be low in fat and cholesterol. It can contain fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products, fish, poultry, and nuts. The diet plan should include minimum red meat, sweets, added

sugars, and sugar-containing beverages.

**Regular exercise:** Regular physical activity can reduce the excess fat in the body and hence bring down blood pressure to the desired level. Most doctors advise at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activities such as brisk walking, dancing, bowling, riding a bike, working in a garden, and cleaning the house, at least five days a week.

**No to tobacco:** Smoking can damage the blood vessels, already thick with fat deposits, and raise the risk for HBP. It also can lead to aggravation of other health problems related to HBP.

**Managing stress:** Learning the art of coping with stress is key to keeping the blood pressure under control. One needs to find an activity that gives him/her maximum relaxation. It can be music, yoga, meditation, or other hobbies.

## Medicines

While blood pressure is kept under mainly through lifestyle changes, medicines too have a role in achieving the target.

Punarnavasava, of which punarnava (*Boerhaavia diffusa*) is the main ingredient, has been found to reduce blood pressure and related ailments. Punarnava (Hogweed) is known for its blood thinning and fat reducing properties.

Triphala and guggulu are also effective Ayurvedic medicines to control hypertension.

**Garlic:** Consumption of garlic is one of the best remedies for hypertension. However, raw garlic has heating effect and hence it should be mixed with other herbs to overcome any adverse effect. Formulations of garlic with milk and buttermilk are known to be very safe and effective.

1. Pulverise 12 gm of garlic, put it in a smooth cloth bag and dip in a mixture of 180 ml milk and 720 ml water. Reduce it to 180 ml, remove garlic and drink the milk.
2. Pulverise garlic and mix it with buttermilk. In the early stages, it is advised to use 1 mg of garlic thrice a day and gradually, it can be increased to 3 gm three times a day.





# Natural Approach To Birth Control



Vaidya Lakshmi Anoop, B.A.M.S

**A**n incantation in the Rig Veda says: "A man with many children succumbs to miseries." This is perhaps the oldest statement with a suggestion against a large family. Even today, population explosion, unintended pregnancies, sexually-transmitted diseases etc. continue to cause major public health issues world-wide. It will be interesting to know how an ancient healthcare system like Ayurveda dealt with such problems. Vaidya Lakshmi Anoop gives details about Ayurvedic contraceptives.

Procreation or no creation, Ayurveda has ways to deal with them.

Ayurveda suggests Vajikarana therapy for those who wish to conceive. On the other hand, Ayurveda has many suggestions for those who are in need of natural contraceptives.

Like in other areas of healthcare, Ayurveda has developed many methods in the practice of contraception. Safe period, coitus interruptus and other contraceptive methods have been described very

well in Ayurveda texts. References about practice of contraception have been available since the period of the Vedas. On animal experiments and through clinical studies, these drugs have been found to be very efficacious for the purpose of contraception without causing side-effects.

## Modern methods

In today's world, halting conception is not that difficult, for we have various contraceptives like condoms, spermicidal gels, intra-uterine devices and also we have many surgical measures in this regard. Not all contraceptive methods are appropriate for all situations, and the most appropriate method of birth control depends on a woman's overall health, age, frequency of sexual activity, number of sexual partners, desire to have children in the future, and family history of certain diseases. Except for pills, intra-uterine devices and surgery, the failure rate of various other contraceptive methods is high. Hormonal contraceptives and intra-uterine devices like Copper - T are

reported to generate incidents of the highest side-effects. Surgical sterilization in males can also cause side-effects. Available local contraceptive measures do not give 100% surety of prevention of conception.

## Contraceptives in Ayurveda

Ayurveda suggests low-cost, user-friendly, reliable, and side-effect-free approach for family planning, which is the need of the hour. Many research works are ongoing in this area. Even the Government of India has recognized the role of indigenous systems of medicine in population control. The Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, New Delhi, and the Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow, are undertaking a lot of research projects on indigenous contraceptive methods.

Regulated sexual life or abstinence from sex was considered as the method of contraception in Ayurvedic classics. Ayurveda treatises like Bhava Prakash, Yoga Ratnakara, Bhaishajya Ratnavali, etc have mentioned about different combi-





nations of herbal and herbo-mineral contraceptive preparations for local as well as oral use by men and women.

Some of the preparations have been tested scientifically and some are yet to be tested. To confirm scientific validity of these herbal and herbo-mineral preparations, a number of pharmacological and clinical studies have been carried out by scientists of different faculties of life sciences.

Single herbal drugs mentioned in Ayurvedic texts are found to have anti-ovulatory and anti-implantation activities on pharmacological screening. Research on the properties of the herbs showed that these herbs are effective in contraception.

Vidanga (*Emblica ribes*) – Research studies show that it possesses 83% anti-fertility activity.

Talisa (*Abies webbiana*) – Research showed that it possesses 51% anti-implantation activity.

Chitraka (*Plumbago zeylanica*) – It showed anti-fertility, anti-implantation, anti-oestrogenic, anti-ovulatory, anti-gonadotrophic activities.

Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*) – Its bark extract possesses spermicidal

activity. It also showed significant decline of sperm motility and sperm density. Fructose concentration of seminal vesicles was significantly reduced.

Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*) – It possesses anti-implantation, anti-zygotic, abortifacient properties.

Nagakesara (*Mesua ferrea*) – It possesses anti-implantation properties.

Japakusuma (*Hibiscus rosasinensis*) – Research studies showed that benzene extract (total) has 100% anti-fertility effect. It also possesses anti-spermatogenic, anti-ovulatory, anti-implantation, abortifacient properties. It exhibited post-coital anti-fertility effect in 80% treated rats.

Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) leaves – They significantly reduce sperm count and motility, increase testosterone levels and decrease LH and FSH. They possess spermatogenic effect. Studies showed that the contraceptive effect of Tulsi in male was comparable to female contraceptive pills, which were also reversible.

Haridra (*Curcuma longa*) – Studies showed that intra-vaginal administration of curcuma caused reduc-

tion in fertility. Studies also showed that it causes reversible suppression of spermatogenesis and fertility, thereby suggesting the potential of this plant in the regulation of male fertility. They produce anti-androgenic effect.

Local contraceptives for females

1. Vaginal application of moistened Saindhava lavana (rock salt) with Tila taila (Gingely oil) before coitus.
2. Fumigation of vaginal canal with wood of Neem before coitus.
3. Filling vaginal canal with Dhattura root (*Datura metal*) powder which is uprooted during 14th day of first fortnight of lunar month.
4. The seed of shiresha (*Albizia lebbeck*) is a potent spermicide. It immobilises the human sperm in one minute. It possesses anti-ovulatory and anti-fertility effect. Females can use it as local application.
5. Neem oil (*Azadirachta indica*) when applied locally, acts as vaginal contraceptive. It possesses spermicidal, anti-ovulatory and anti-implantation effects.

Oral contraceptives for females

1. Talisapatra powder (*Abies webbi-*





ana) and Gairika (Red Ochre, Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) powder in equal parts in the dose of 1 karsha (12 gm) acts as a contraceptive.

2. Paste of chitraka (*Plumbago zeylanica*) root mixed with Nirgundi (*Vitex negundo*) juice and administered in the dose of one karsha (12 gm) is an effective contraceptive.

3. Powder of sarshapa seeds (*Brassica campestris*), Tandulam (*Amaranthus spinosus*), Sarkara (Sugar candy) pound with Tandulodaka (rice water) when taken with milk prevents conception.

4. Powders of Amla (*Embllica officinalis*), Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*) and Abhaya (*Terminalia chebula*), along with water, make the follicular development ineffective.

5. Haridra (*Curcuma longa*) rhizome, having knot, is to be given one rhizome per day during the 3 days of menstruation and continued for another 3 days.

6. Powder of Krishna Jeeraka (*Carum carvi*), Kachooram (*Hedychium spicatum*), Nagakesara (*Mesua ferrea*), Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Kalonji (*Nigella sativa*), Kayaphala (*Myrica nagi*) is to be mixed and given as pills in the size

of ziziphus fruit for 7 days.

7. Flowers of Japa (*Hibiscus rosasinensis*), if taken immediately after the delivery of a child, is said to prevent future conception. The anti-implantation activity of this was tested scientifically.

8. The entire seeds of the cotyledons of white variety of Gunja (*Abrus precatorius*), after removing the epicarp are to be soaked in water for one night. Administration of the potion on the fourth, fifth and sixth day of menstruation is stated to prevent conception for three years. Interesting scientific studies were conducted on this regimen. It produces absolute infertility effect which is also reversible on withdrawal.

9. Pippali (*Piper longum*), Vidanga (*Embelia ribes*) and Tankana (borax), made into a powder in equal quantities and taken with milk during the fertile phase, is an effective contraceptive. Experimental studies proved its efficacy and there were only two failures amongst 458 users. There is no adverse effect on lactation or any other side-effects. The reversibility of fertility is stated to be immediate after withdrawal of medication.

#### **Oral contraceptive for males**

1. The herb Arka (*Calotropis gigantea*) inhibits spermatogenesis and acts as oral contraceptives for males. Calotropin, a novel compound, is responsible for its fertility control.

2. Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) leaves when administered in the dose of 2 gm daily acts as an effective anti-fertility agent in males.

3. Haridra (*Curcuma longa*) extracts induce fertility control in male.

The natural birth control methods mentioned in Ayurvedic texts help to minimize chances of unwanted pregnancies and prevent sexually-transmitted diseases. Contraceptive methods were in use since the time of Vedas. Unlike hormonal contraceptives or other contraceptive methods, Ayurvedic contraceptives are free from side-effects and are very effective. So this vast field has to be researched more for benefiting mankind.

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Smt. Shailaja Chandra (Former Secretary, Dept. of AYUSH, Govt. of India) releasing the 6th World Ayurveda Congress & AROGYA Expo brochure (1st Announcement) at Delhi on 12 December 2013



## 6th World Ayurveda Congress and Arogya Expo - Delhi 2014

**(1-5 November 2014)** Ayurveda, the ancient healthcare science of India was beset with challenges at the turn of the 20th century, even though it was being considered the science of life and the source of most alternative healthcare systems. Its growth rate was stagnating and certain 'scientific' reviews were questioning the efficacy of Ayurvedic formulations, given their heavy metal content. European legislation was threatening to bar Ayurveda from the continent forever. Ayurvedic organizations did register protests but could not mobilise the cohesive, critical mass needed to make their voices heard. They needed advocacy groups and forums to offer robust scientific support to the idea of Ayurveda. This raised the need for a credible platform that would potentially disseminate authentic, unbiased, comprehensive information to national and global audiences.

As a result, in 2001, the WAC (World Ayurveda Congress) was established, an appropriately optimistic development to harbinger the start of the new millennium. Of course, this was helped by the fact that despite the stated challenges, global aware-

ness of Ayurveda was on the rise. Increasingly, people across the world were discovering what a panacea for lifestyle-related and chronic diseases Ayurveda could be. Also, there was new evidence to validate Ayurvedic scriptures, thus piquing interest in this science. Over 10 years and through four Congresses, the WAC has emerged as a global forum for all stakeholders to not only network but also engage in intellectual exchange to strengthen the Ayurveda sector, reaffirm their sense of purpose and think about the future. It showcases advances in relevant fields, orients students and facilitates interaction between professionals and consumers, thus boosting Ayurveda commerce.

The 6th World Ayurveda Congress & AROGYA Expo, organized by World Ayurveda Foundation and Gujarat Ayurved University, is scheduled to be held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from 1-5 November 2014.

The 6th World Ayurveda Congress creates a platform for facilitating the all round development of Ayurveda in India and the world at large by bringing together stakeholders, policy

makers and the general public under a common roof to deliberate on critical issues concerned with the growth and application of Ayurveda for public benefit. It offers opportunities for worldwide networking and evolution of strategies that can position Ayurveda as a force in human health care at the global scenario.

Ayurveda is already an integral part of healthcare delivery both in the government and private sectors. But many people who are curious about its effectiveness or would like to use Ayurvedic therapies do not have an opportunity to keep abreast with current developments. International visitors are keen to find out the status of research and practice, but they have negligible opportunities for interaction; often this leads to negative assumptions which too need correction. The World Ayurveda Congress provides a strong platform for all stakeholders to come together and benefit from the opportunities that the Congress provides.

For more information, visit: [www.ayurworld.org](http://www.ayurworld.org)



Yoga Zone



# Total Fitness -The Yoga Way





Yoga aims at the integration of personality at the levels of physique, emotions, and spirit. Yoga and physical education are complementary disciplines. Physical education is defined as "an integral part of the educational process which enhances and harmonizes the physical, intellectual, social and emotional aspects of an individual's personality, chiefly through directed physical activity." Yoga has much to contribute in the area of physical education and sports.

The last 100 years have witnessed rapid strides in modern science which touched almost all areas of life. Highly- accurate and sophisticated methods for measuring and recording certain physiological processes, such as breath rhythm, heart rate and neuro-electrical activity, are available now.

The physiological effects of yogic techniques are being appraised now-a-days using these methods. These studies chiefly relate to respiratory, circulatory, muscular-articular and, to a lesser extent,

can achieve all these fitness components. The additional benefit of yoga is that one can achieve emotional stability and confidence, which helps one to cope with any challenging situation.

The means for Yoga practice are: yogic postures (asanas), breathing practices (pranayama), meditation and other special practices like mudras, bandhas and kriyas.

### **Yogic Postures (Asanas)**

Asanas have been evolved over the centuries with a view to giving exercise to each and every muscle, gland and nerve in the body. These special patterns of postures establish proper rhythm in the neuro-muscular tonic impulses and improve the general tone of the muscles. By regular practice, one develops agility, balance, endurance and great vitality. Asanas are not just physical exercises. They are bio-physio-psychological postures.

Each posture helps stretch some muscles, imparts a good massage to some internal organs, gives a refreshing twist to some areas, acts as an energiser to some vital points, an extra refinement to respiration, a filling feeling to the heart and transports plenty of nutrients to each cell. And to top it all, yoga causes no exhaustion of the body.

### **Breathing exercises (Pranayama)**

The term Prana indicates life force. Prana is the energy source of all functions in our body. The primary expression of prana in our body is the breathing cycle. And, through pranayama (extension/ control of breath), one regulates the pranic flow through the subtle channels to make it proper and regular. Proper pranic flow in the body means proper functioning of all internal organs. This practice encourages slow and deep breathing which slows the heart rate, regulates its rhythm and oxygenates the blood. This induces a feeling of calmness which leads to mental stability and confidence.

### **Bandhas and mudras**

Bandha means bondage, and this is practised by contracting and controlling certain organs or parts of the body. Mudra is a seal, an energy lock, or a closed circuit; in this context, a hand position or a gesture. With these practices, one tries to consciously control certain semi-voluntary and involuntary muscles in the body. The autonomic nervous system is influenced by this and the internal organs get toned up.

### **Kriyas**

Kriyas are some deep- cleansing processes and are six in number. These practices balance all the doshas and they bring control over the autonomic nervous system.

### **Fitness Factors**



endocrine and nervous systems.

All such investigations could provide a deeper understanding of physiological, bio-chemical, neurological and psychological effects of yoga on the human system. It is the need of the hour to utilize all this knowledge to boost our 'fitness' for life.

The need for physical fitness need not be over-emphasized. A sound body is the seat of a sound mind. So, how does one achieve a sound body and mind simultaneously?

According to modern concepts, the main parameters of fitness are: strength, endurance, flexibility and speed. Through regular yoga practice one



Yogasanas are mild, static types of exercises. As yoga sutras indicate: 'Asana is a pose where comfort and steadiness are blended perfectly.' They provide stable and compact foundations for remarkable improvement in stamina.

**Cardiovascular system (heart and arteries)** -Asanas are isometric, which means they rely on holding muscle tension for a short period of time. This improves cardiovascular fitness and circulation. Studies show that regular yoga practice helps to normalise blood pressure.

**Digestive system** - Improved blood circulation and the massaging effect of surrounding muscles speed up sluggish digestion.

**Musculo-skeletal** - Joints are moved over their full range of motion, which increases mobility and eases pressure. The gentle stretching releases muscle tension and increases flexibility. Long-term benefits include reduced back pain and improved posture.

**Nervous system** - Improved blood circulation, easing of muscle tension and the act of focusing the mind on the breath—all combine to soothe the nervous system. Long-term benefits include reduced stress and anxiety levels, and increased feelings of calm and well-being.

General postures develop flexibility, balance, strength, and endurance. Flexibility is generally developed for all major articulations, but the most important area for flexibility is the hip. Balance helps to build up strength, control, and concentration. There are postures for balance on almost any body part that can be used for this purpose, including both feet, one foot, knees, buttocks, shoulders, elbows, fore-arms, hands, and head. Balance postures are most often combined with forward bends, back bends, or with padmasana (the lotus" posture).

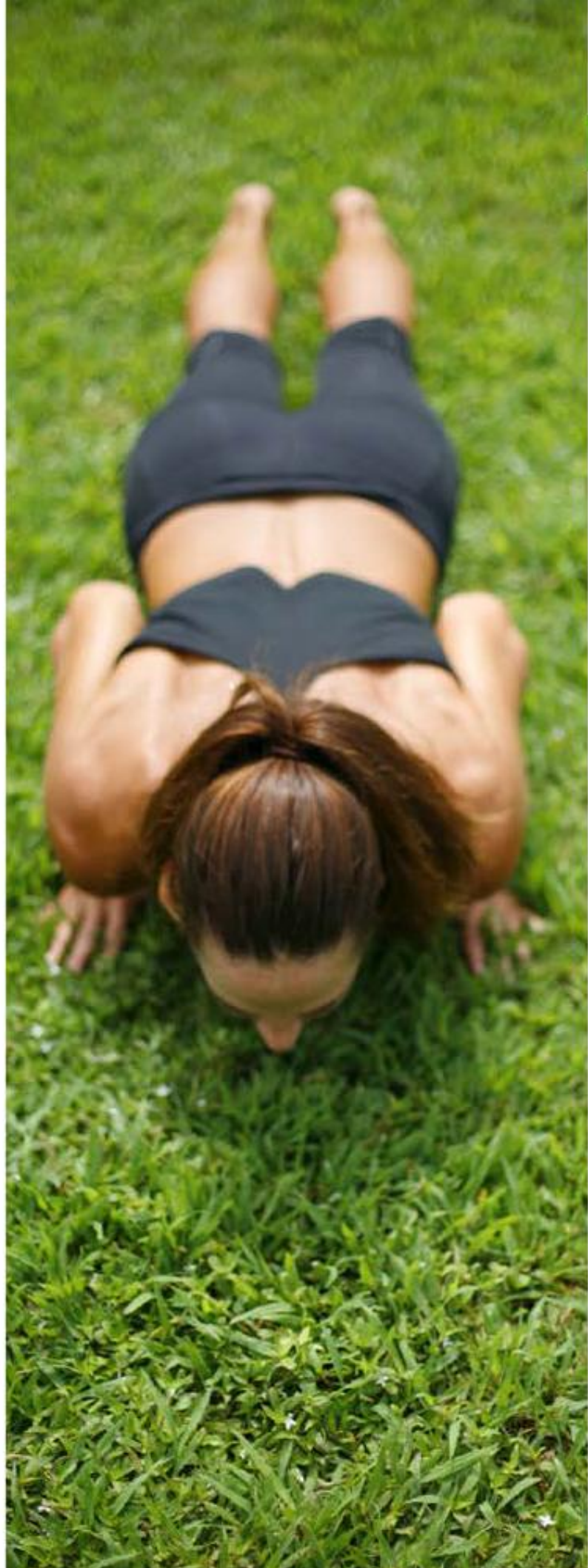
Endurance is developed by regular, slow and steady practice. Rather than muscular development, asanas always give importance to the health of the inner vital organs. They contribute much to the flexibility and strength of the spine.

### **Modern techniques and Yoga**

A lot of athletes have tremendous stamina, but, in most cases, their minds don't have the same strength. Even simple problems can make them lose their balance, which may then lead to a full aggressive response. For such people, yoga offers relief and yogic practices release tensions from the body.

### **Yoga prevents and cures sports injuries**

Vigorous physical activities leave muscles susceptible to pulls and strains. More intensive practices need more stretch and more are the chances of injury. Slow stretching procedures of yoga can prevent and cure these types of injuries. Yoga always tones up the muscles. Athletes engaged in running events need to do maximum stretching practices because their hamstrings and calf muscles are always vulnerable to injuries due to vigorous activity. And, with regular yoga practice, one can maintain one's stamina and vitality throughout one's life.







## ITB Berlin 2014 confirms itself the world's leading travel trade show-increase in international buyers, exhibitors and congress delegates

This year's ITB Berlin sent out very positive signals for the international travel industry. Following a recent period of relatively sluggish growth, particularly in many recession-hit countries, the global travel industry is once again on course for rapid growth. In Germany consumers have ensured that the mood in the travel industry is positive. This year's ITB Berlin reported a four per cent rise in trade visitors and an increase in business volume, which Messe Berlin estimates reached 6.5 billion euros. The focus of the world's leading travel trade fair, which came to an end on Sunday, 9th March was on travel bookings via smart-



phones and tablets and on sustainable practices in the travel industry.

ITB Berlin 2014 took place from Wednesday, 5 to Sunday, 9 March and a total of 10,147 exhibitors from 189 countries displayed their products and services to 170,000 visitors, who included 114,000 trade visitors.

Next year, ITB Berlin will be taking place from Wednesday, 4 to Sunday 8 March. Mongolia is the official partner country of ITB 2015.

### A National Seminar on Clinical Tridoshic Diagnosis and Treatment of Ayurveda and Siddha, based on Guna Siddhanta on 15th to 17th of August, 2014

**Dr.L.Mahadevan's Ayurvedic Foundation** under the eminent guidance of Dr.L.Mahadevan is planning to conduct a three day seminar on "Clinical Tridoshic diagnosis and Treatment of Ayurveda and Siddha based on Guna

Siddhanta", in the month of August 2014.

**The main highlights of the seminar are**

- Mula siddhanta based diagnosis
- Analysis of various yogas (formulations).

- Critical analysis and utility of siddha medicines in day-to-day practice.
- Update on new investigation techniques and medicines.

for more information visit: [www.vaidyanadham2014.blogspot.in](http://www.vaidyanadham2014.blogspot.in)

## World Ayurvedic Expo 2014

**Bonsai Meet 26 - 27 August 2014**  
**Hitex Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad**



World Ayurvedic Expo 2014 is a co-located exhibition and conference for Ayurvedic, Natural and Herbal products manufacturers. This will be the largest Exhibition for Ayurvedic, Herbal and Natural products manufacturers in India. This is an international event with around 250 plus exhibitors from around the world participating in

it. This mega event attracts 10,000+ B2B visitors from around the world apart from the conference delegates. This co-located event promotes Ayurvedic, Natural and Herbal product manufacturers in this country through our event. This event also provides unparalleled exposure to Ayurvedic, Natural and Herbal products interna-

tionally. Apart from exhibition there is also a parallel conference happening for different segments of healthcare which will be focusing on knowledge sharing, issues & concerns for growth in the industry.

For more information, visit: [www.worldayurvedicexpo.com](http://www.worldayurvedicexpo.com)



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### **AVTAR's MoU with Ayurvedic Point**

The Ayurvedic Trust, Coimbatore, with its Advanced Research Institute known as AVTAR, had entered into an MoU with Ayurvedic Point, Italy, for the global propagation of Ayurveda. The MoU was signed by Dr. Antonio Morandi, Director of The Ayurvedic Point, Italy, and Dr. P. Ram Manohar, Director of Research at the Ayurvedic Trust, during the 12th International Ayurveda Symposium held at Birstein, Germany.

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### **Italian medical doctors can practice Ayurveda**

It was on 18th May, 2002, that the Italian National Federation of Colleges of MDs and Dentists (FNOMCeO) signed the Document of Acknowledgement of Non-Conventional Medicines, which now falls under the exclusive competence, practice, and responsibility of MDs (chiropractic, osteopathy, phytotherapy, homeopathy, anthroposophy, acupuncture, Ayurvedic medicine, and homotoxicology). This means that Italian medical doctors can now practice Ayurveda. In Milan and many other cities, local Councils of MDs and Dentists have opened specific Registers for physicians expert in Ayurveda. Registration requires the doctor concerned to have had sufficient education in Ayurveda. However, lack of government regulation continues to make things difficult for insurance, products, and, more importantly, acknowledgement of 'Ayurveda therapist' as a profession, with such an expertise that co-presence with the doctor is mandatory for correct implementation of any Ayurveda therapy.

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# Ayurvedic Point, Milan

**A**yurvedic Point, the most reputed institution of Ayurveda in Italy, is the only institution that offers an Ayurvedic training program for MDs in Europe. Moreover, this school is one of the reference centers for medical training in Ayurveda throughout the world. Ayurvedic Point was established in 2001 by Antonio Morandi and Carmen Tosto. Ayurvedic Point has been awarded with the ISO9001 certification for its procedural, research and teaching activities.

Dr. Antonio Morandi is President of Ayurvedic Point srl. He has worked for 15 years in the research and development of neurological medicines for the pharmaceutical industry and in Ayurveda since 1996. He is also the Director of the School of Ayurvedic Medicine 'Ayurvedic Point', in Milan, the most important educational institution in Italy, which counts 150 students per year and whose syllabus is widely accepted in Europe.

Ayurvedic Point's activities are channeled through its two divisions - the educational and cultural division, including the School of Ayurvedic Medicine and the clinical and research division.

## Ayurvedic Point - Philosophy

"Sastram tu vyapino vidyat prayogam tueka desikam"

***"Shastra is universal but its applications are local," is the motto underlying the history of Ayurvedic Point.***

The environmental conditions in which living organisms grow and evolve are different but the principle 'Life' is the same everywhere. A traditional medicine is composed of one part concerning local conditions governing the expression of life, while its other parts pertain to basic principles of life. The second part is coded through the first one, which is why Westerners learning Ayurveda must enter deeply into the mind and soul of Indian culture, so as to decode basic principles that can then be applied to western conditions. According to this point of view, the widespread concept of 'globalization' of Ayurveda, meaning its application 'as it is' in any part of the world, is misleading; many conditions typical of India cannot be reproduced in other countries.

## The Ashta Vaidya touch

Dr. A. N. Narayanan Nambi and the members of his family, one of the most





# Ayurveda

& Health Tourism



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ancient Ashtavaidya families of India, in Thrishur, Kerala, had extended great support and guidance to Ayurvedic Point in developing a novel system of translating Ayurvedic basic principles in modern terms and concepts, without betraying the real tradition of Ayurveda.

Even now, this Ashtavaidya family and the Ayurvedic point team go hand in hand towards a global 'localization' of Ayurveda. Additionally, Ayurvedic Point students can follow an in-depth parallel 4-year study program in India at the Ayurveda Research and Education Institute of SNA Oushadhasala, Trishur, Kerala, directed by Dr. Ashtavaidyan A. N. Narayanan Nambi.

This parallel program is recognised by a joint Ayurvedic Point-SNA Oushadhasala Diploma of specialisation in Panchakarma Techniques. In this context, the application of the above-said "Ayurveda localisation" seminal work has originated a novel teaching method for international students in Ayurveda, developed by Ayurvedic Point along with SNA Oushadhasala, which allows a deeper insight and learning experience.

### Education

The Ayurvedic Point's school programs are two distinct courses: One postgraduate course of 4 years for physicians and the other professional course for therapists, both following a common integrated study plan and syllabus. Its educational program is of the highest standard in Italy and is the only one congruent with the WHO's guidelines published in Benchmarks of Training in Ayurveda. It has been taken by the council of MDs and dentists of many cities in Italy (Bologna was the first in 2006) as the template for the main requirement to be registered as doctor expert in Ayurvedic medicine. Moreover, through its teachers, Ayurvedic Point collaborates with several universities for lecturing on Ayurveda in the faculties of medicine, pharmacy and sociology as

well as in master courses, and has also become a collaborative center and master course stage center of the prestigious Milano-Bicocca University.

The program of Ayurvedic Point school has been used as a template, along with the Rosenberg European Academy of Ayurveda, Germany, and the College of Ayurveda, University of Middlesex, United Kingdom, for the elaboration of a European educational standard program in Ayurveda for medical doctors.

This program has been proposed to Department of AYUSH (Department of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy), Ministry of Health, Government of India. It is noteworthy that Ayurvedic Point established, along with the Società Scientifica Italiana di Medicina Ayurvedica (SSIMA) - Italian Scientific

Society of Ayurvedic Medicine, the Guidelines for Good Practice of Ayurveda, which have been published and adopted by the Permanent Consensus Committee on Non-conventional Medicines. The guidelines, along with the educational program, have been submitted to the Italian government for the study of a law proposal on non-conventional medicines.

### Clinical and Research Activity

The efforts in translating Ayurveda logic and basic principles according to 'localisation' form the basis of Ayurvedic Point's research activities. Ayurvedic Point is working hard on the enormous possibility to create a network of excellence in research and to cross-interact with the institutions of each European country. Collaborations on research projects and clinical studies on Ayurveda have been set up with the Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Sociology of the main Italian as well as European Universities.

Ayurvedic Point collaborates with national and international universities, and hospital and academic institutions in research as well as clinical projects.

Ayurvedic Point also runs its own outpatient medical centers in Milan, where it is possible to undergo Ayurvedic medical consultations and all the traditional physical treatments and therapies.

Ayurvedic Point is actively collaborating on Ayurveda research projects with national and international academic institutions. Research projects and clinical studies on Ayurveda have been set up with schools of medicine, pharmacy, and sociology in major universities, and proposals for national and international projects written and presented.



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**Are you using chemicals or artificial materials for your beauty needs? You may get instant results, but you will**





# The Natural Way

have to compromise with your health. Try some herbal beauty tips, instead.

## Head lice?

Worried of head lice? Here is a simple solution. Take a handful of sacred basil leaves and a handful of phyllanthus leaves. Mix with some rice gruel water and crush to make a herbal shampoo.

Apply it on head like any other shampoo. Regular use of this shampoo will remove lice.

Another solution for head lice is here. Take some fenugreek, vetiver and camphor. Soak the fenugreek in water overnight. Grind it into a paste. In ten litres of water, add a handful khas-khas and put to boil. Once it is cooled, add a pinch of camphor.

Apply the fenugreek paste on the head and leave it like that for some time. Wash it off with the water which is boiled with poppy seed (khas - khas). And see the result for yourself!

## Let your face shine!

A glowing face will boost your confidence sky high. Here are three simple, natural ways to keep your face charming!

**1.** Get some turmeric, tree turmeric, liquorice, Indian valerian and red sandalwood.

Take equal measures of all ingredients and grind to a fine powder. (You can store the powder in an air-tight container and use it as and when required).

Take a bit of the powder and boil it in milk, make a paste and let it cool. Wash the face well. Apply the paste gently on the face. When it becomes completely dry, wash it off with cold water. Do this twice a week.

**2.** An effective beauty solution with jasmine and rose water! Collect some jasmine buds. Grind it with rose water to a paste.

Apply this paste at night just before you go to bed and leave it there the whole night. Wash it off with water in the morning. Within some weeks you'll feel the difference!

**3.** Take equal measures of sandalwood, bark of the lodhri and turmeric. Grind them to a paste with



a little water.

Apply the paste on the face. When it is completely dry, wash it off with water. You can do this twice a week.

### Scars and blemishes on the face

Some of you may be worried about the scars and blemishes on your skin. A simple and effective solution is here.

All that you need for this are a piece of red sandalwood and some honey. Red sandalwood is a very effective scar remover. Even deep scars left by chicken pox can be removed with red sandalwood. It also improves the complexion of the skin. Though it is available in the form of powder, it is better to buy a piece of the wood and rub it on stone (with rough surface) to make a paste.

Pour a bit of honey on to a clean, rough surface like a piece of granite, a cement top or on to a stone that is commonly used for making herbal ointments. Now rub the piece of wood on the surface. Keep pouring the honey little by little as the wood is rubbed. Mix it to get a paste.

Apply the paste on the face. After half an hour, wash it off with lukewarm water. Repeat this every day. Within some weeks, you will get the marks removed.

### Dark circles under the eyes

Here are some of the easiest tips to remove dark circles under the eyes.

The ingredients you need are red sandalwood, sandalwood and rose water.

**1.** Take 100 grams each of red sandalwood and sandalwood. Make a powder of both and mix together. Make a paste with a bit of the mixed powder and an adequate quantity of rosewater. Apply the paste on the dark circles under eyes. Wash it off when it becomes dry. You will see a noticeable difference in two weeks. Continue the treatment till the dark circles disappear completely.

**2.** Using rosewater you can have a cost-effective beauty formula for dark circles under the eyes. Buy the product of high quality only.



Neem (*Azadirachta indica*)

Put some pure rosewater drops into your eyes or wash the face with it. There are many causes for the dark circles. These include lack of sleep, strain on the eyes due to continuous reading or sitting in front of the computer etc. In such cases the eyes may be protected by the dripping rosewater in them or washing the whole face with it regularly.

**3.** With some pure honey you can have magical cure of dark circles. Apply a thin layer of honey on the dark area. After one hour, wash off with cold water. Repeat it for a week.

### Acne

Some effective remedies for acne are given here.

**1.** Neem and turmeric are very good antidotes to acne. Take some neem leaves and a bit of turmeric. Grind them together to get a thick paste.

Apply the paste on the affected area and wash it off after half an hour. If this treatment is carried out every day for at least one week, the acne should disappear.

**2.** Native herbs can give best results against acne. Take equal measures of green gram, turmeric and neem leaves. Grind them together to get a paste.

Apply as a face-pack. Wash the face with lukewarm water when the pack starts to dry. Now wipe off the water with a fine handkerchief, preferably made of cotton. Finally, apply a thin layer of coconut oil on the face. Apply on alternate days.

### Cracked lips

**1.** Cracked lips are a common discomfort during the cold season. Many artificial lip balms are available in the market which may negatively affect the natural color and smoothness of lips.

The best natural medicine for cracked lips is pure butter obtained from cow's milk. When the lips are cracked, apply butter over the lips a few times during the day. This is ideal for children also since even if the butter goes into the mouth, it is harmless.

**2.** Liquorice and honey together work well against cracked lips: Crush a bit of liquorice well and add some honey and grind to a thick paste. Application of this paste over lips will relieve the problems during the cold season.

### Red Lips - Naturally?

Yes, it is possible.

Now-a-days, the use of artificial colors to redden the lips is widely



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prevalent. However, at least some of them are known to be harmful. Arecanut can be used as a natural alternative. Take a tender arecanut, crush it well and then apply it on the lips. If this continued for a minimum of 14 days, it will help to redden the lips.

#### **For lustrous complexion**

There are a lot of natural ways to attain a lustrous complexion.

1. Collect some raw gooseberry and pure honey. Crush the raw gooseberries; sprinkle a little water on that. Make an ounce of raw gooseberry extract by straining it through a clean cloth.

This juice obtained by straining the crushed gooseberries is not for applying on the body. Mix a teaspoon of honey with the gooseberry extract and have the mixture before breakfast. The breakfast should be eaten only an hour after taking the mixture. If possible, continue for long. This medication will make the skin lustrous. It adds some health to your hair also!

2. Almond oil and green gram powder can add beauty to your skin. It is simple but effective!

Buy almond oil of good quality. Massage your body with this oil.

After two hours, wash off with fine green gram powder. Do this once a week. See your skin's shining gets improved!

#### **Unwanted hair growth**

Many people face this problem. Now try some herbs instead of those harmful chemicals. Well, please don't expect results the next moment. It will work, but could take time.

The ingredients you need are turmeric and green gram powder.

Scrape off the skin of a piece of raw turmeric. Grind the skinned piece to a paste adding just enough water.

Apply the thick turmeric paste on the areas with unwanted hair. After an hour, wash it off with green gram powder and soap bark. If the hair growth is excessive, it is best to remove the hair before the application of the paste.

#### **Cracked heels**

1. It kills the beauty of your feet and is sometimes painful, too! With neem leaves and raw turmeric, you can heal you heels.

Make a paste of equal measures of neem leaves and raw turmeric. An hour before going to bed, scrape your wet feet with a good scraper to clean the affected area and

remove as much of the hard skin as possible. Now apply the paste. Wash it off after one hour, enjoy a good sleep then. Regular application of this mix will remove cracks from your heels.

Another effective herbal mix against cracked heels can be prepared by neem leaves, raw turmeric and curd.

Take equal measures of neem leaves and raw turmeric, grind them to make a paste and mix with curd.

Clean the feet by rubbing against a hard surface or with a scraper. Apply the paste on the affected area. Wash it off after one hour. Within weeks, you can walk with confidence!

#### **Grey hair? Believe in Indian gooseberry!**

It is the best way for preventing grey hair. proper application of gooseberry and shoe flower can work wonders to your hair!

Take 10 gooseberries. Remove the seeds, and grind the fleshy part. Add roughly the same quantity of shoe flower and grind again to make the herbal paste. Apply the paste on the hair and scalp. Leave on for half an hour and then rinse off. Repeat this regularly -two or three times a week - for a few months. Your hair will be strengthened and gradually, grey hair will disappear.

#### **Take care of your nails**

Henna leaves and turmeric can protect you nail well.

Take a handful of henna leaves, add two pieces of raw turmeric and grind both together to a paste.

Apply the paste on the fingers covering the nails. Wash it off after half an hour. This treatment helps in beautifying the nails.

- From the Desk



# Enhance your digestion- The Ayurveda Way



## Indigestion- causes

- Improper eating habits
- Eating a lot of fried food, meat, sweets, heavy food and overeating
- Eating incompatible food items
- Eating at irregular times
- Eating before the last meal is fully digested
- Eating very quickly or mixing too many food items in one meal
- Consuming too much tea, coffee and alcohol
- Smoking
- Lack of good sleep
- Emotional disturbances (stress, grief, anxiety)
- Taking drugs like antibiotics, painkillers and steroids.
- Suppression of natural urges

Many of us suffer from digestion problems such as gas, bloating, stomach pain, constipation, heart-burn, and fatigue after eating every day. Ayurveda provides simple solutions to these common problems by considering two aspects: how we eat and what we eat.

### Sit, relax and eat!

Ayurveda considers eating procedure as something reverent. And it says: 'eat sitting down, in a settled environment, without distractions. (Switch off your Television!)

When you sit to eat, your stomach is in a relaxed posture and your awareness naturally will come to the taste, texture, and smell of the food. This will greatly improve the

digestion. Ayurveda suggests avoiding eating while standing, walking or driving.

Stimulate and balance your digestive fire(Agni)

A person's vitality, strength and general health depend upon agni, the primordial digestive fire in his body. Agni helps to digest (catabolic metabolism) and assimilate (anabolic metabolism) the food in the body.

Imbalanced agni results in indigestion and related problems. Digestive agni can be compared to a burning fire. It will take a long time to cook the food with a very low flame. The same way, a big fire can burn out the food.

Eating a small piece of fresh ginger (1inch) with a





few drops of lemon juice and a few pinches of salt added to it before a full meal is highly beneficial. This will activate your salivary glands and produce the necessary enzymes so that the nutrients in the food are easily absorbed by the body. (For those who have over-active agni, this is not recommended)

It is better to avoid cold drinks at meals and ice- cold foods in general. Highly- chilled water can extinguish the digestive fire. Juices or milk which are too cold will weaken digestion. Cold drinks and food items mixed with warm, cooked food can cause stomach cramps, bloating and general discomfort in the stomach area.

#### Breakfast, lunch and dinner

'Breakfast' means to break a fast. It's better to break the fast of the night with a light meal. Your digestive system needs warm, nourishing food in the morning to stimulate it, but not too much. Anything that is light on your digestion and adds nutrients rather than empty calories is recommended.

A glass of warm water mixed with honey and lemon on an empty stom-

ach in the morning is quite effective in maintaining good digestion.

Never skip your breakfast and do not forget to include fresh fruits, boiled vegetables, and freshly- cooked warm cereal in the breakfast.

Ayurveda recommends that lunch should be the largest meal of the day. The Sun is strongest between 12 and 2 p.m. and during this time your digestive fire is also at its maximum potency. As the Sun goes down so does your agni. Eat heavier foods, such as paneer at lunch.

Dinner should be lighter than lunch and should ideally be eaten before 8 p.m. Late night meals will disturb your sleep. Moreover, in the late night, the body is working to burn off toxins and to digest food from the day. If you eat after 10p.m., the food may cause toxin accumulation in the system, and the next day you will wake up tired. If you are not fresh and clear when waking up, it is important to analyze the quantity of food and the time of night you are eating dinner.

It is better to avoid the habit of snacking between meals in a day. Your digestive system needs a

rest-and-recharge time to function efficiently at mealtimes and after. If you feel hungry during the day in-between meals, eat fresh fruits, which are healthy and easy to digest.

Drinking warm water made with digestion-enhancing spices, helps digestion as well as purification.

#### Cooking food items the right way

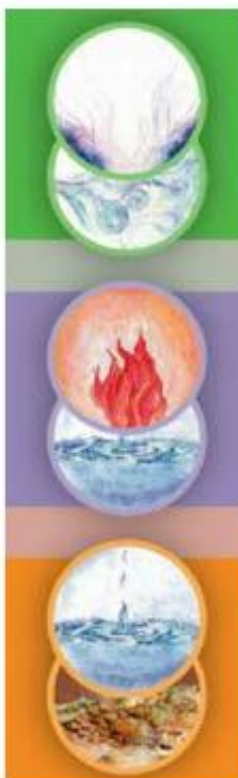
Ayurveda says that the art of cooking is the perfection in combining the spices, vegetables and the fat-all the different enzymes and energetics, in a way that is not confusing for your body's intelligence to break down and incorporate.

Cook with spices like dried ginger, turmeric, cumin, coriander etc. They not only enhance digestion, but also help eliminate toxins and help improve absorption and assimilation of nutrients. Items like lentils which are harder to digest should always be cooked with digestion-enhancing spices to help prevent discomfort and flatulence.

Soaking grains, lentils, nuts and seeds for 30-60 minutes in warm water helps make them easier to digest.



## Food Court



Health and happiness are the tantalizing dreams of all people. Most people, however, don't know the routes to realize those dreams and walk into the traps of diseases. A healthy daily regimen, especially the intake of right food, is the key to a healthy life, minus diseases.

Ayurveda says that food is one of the three pillars of health (thrayopasthambha); the other two being sleep and controlled sex. Food has a significant role in pathya and apathya - (dos and don'ts) explained for all types of treatment since food alone can be a causative factor for diseases.

Maintaining the equilibrium of Vata, Pitta and Kapha (tridoshas) is the key to wellness and their imbalance

# Know Your Doshic Diet

— Dr M S Noushad —

can lead to illness. A diet according to the body constitution will help counter the onset of disease at an early age.

## Vata type

People with Vata dosha should include in their daily diet foods that are liquid or unctuous to balance dryness. The three tastes that help balance Vata are sweet, sour and salty. Minimize foods that are pungent, bitter, or astringent. Milk, citrus fruits, dried fruit or salted, toasted sunflower or pumpkin seeds make good snacks for these people.

Include more vegetables in diet. Carrots, asparagus, tender leafy greens, beets, sweet potatoes and summer squashes such as zucchini and lauki are the best.

Rice and wheat are the best grain for balancing Vata. Basmati rice is ideal. Cook it with a little salt and ghee for added flavor. Reduce the amount of barley, corn, millet, buckwheat, and rye.

Take a hot or herbal tea with snacks in the late afternoon. Avoid drinks with high caffeine as they aggravate Vata.

Nuts are Vata-pacifiers. Soak ten almonds overnight. Blanch and eat them early morning for a healthy burst of energy. Walnuts, hazelnuts and cashews are also good.

There are many food items that aggravate Vata, such as Bengal gram, green peas, green gram and bitter gourd.

## Pitta

The lifestyle recommendation for balancing Pitta is to stay cool both physically and emotionally. For that, have cool food items. Sweet, bitter and astringent are the right tastes for this condition. Milk, sweet rice pudding, coconut and coconut juice, milkshakes made with ripe mangoes and almonds or dates are the best options.

Protect yourself from heat. Stay cool in warm weather by wearing loose cotton clothing. Wear a wide-





brimmed hat and sunglasses to protect your eyes when you go out.

Include asparagus, tender and bitter greens, bitter melon, carrots, fennel, peas, green beans, cauliflower, beets and sweet potatoes in your diet.

Drink lassi with lunch. It will help improve digestion and cool the body.

### **Kapha**

The lifestyle recommendation here is to get moving. Physically, do some exercises daily. To improve mental power, learn a new skill, solve some puzzles or take a class.

Protect yourself from damp and cold. Drink lots of warm water infused with warming spices such as turmeric,

dried ginger and black pepper.

Vegetable soups with beans and diced vegetables, and stews are good dishes for pacifying Kapha dosha.

In vegetables, try to include more carrots, asparagus, broccoli and cauliflower.

Honey is very good to pacify Kapha. Take a tablespoon or two (not more) of raw honey every day. It will help release excess Kapha. But do not cook with honey.

Favor lighter fruits such as apples, pears, pomegranates, cranberries, and apricots. And reduce heavier fruits such as bananas, avocados, pineapples, oranges, peaches, coconuts, melons, dates, and figs.

- The writer is a Govt. Ayurveda Medical Officer, Kerala





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## Ask Your Doctor >>

Dr M Prasad, BAMS, MD (Ay), is the chief physician and director of Sunetri Aurvedashram and Research Centre, Thrissur. Dr Prasad, who specialises in Shalakyatanthra, also edits Bharatiya Vaidya Samvadam, a Malayalam quarterly on principles and practices of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda and Health Tourism readers may send in their queries relating to health conditions. The letters should contain age, sex and a brief description of your health condition.

The letters may either be emailed to us: ayurvedamagazine@gmail.com or sent to:

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### Questions and answers

#### 1. Sir,

I am writing this letter for my 23 year old brother. He has skin rashes on the inner thighs. Terrible itching is his main problem, and rashes are there around the groin. The center of the rash gets reddish-brown, while the edges develop scales. The problem is high during summer. The worst thing he told me is that he has been suffering from this problem since he was 20. He has been trying many creams since then. But none of the creams did help, except some temporary relief. He is having a medium size body and he is a pure vegetarian. Sir, I hope you can help him with a better solution with Ayurvedic medicines.

Thanking you,  
Ganesh, Kottayam.

*Dear Ganesh*

*It seems that your brother left the issue unattended for quite long. It*

*might be a fungal infection to start with, but it has more dimensions than that. Please try a simple home remedy: Make a paste out of Neem leaves, Karanja leaves (Ungu in Malayalam) and turmeric (fresh), and apply this paste on the affected skin. After 1 hour wash this with warm water, mop dry and smear oil of Karanja on that area. It will be great to consult some good ayurvedist there locally.*

#### 2. Sir,

I This is about my sister's 5 year old son. At present, he has no any health issues and of course, he is a very healthy, playful child. The problem is, he tends to over eat while having lunch or dinner. It rarely happens during breakfast also. He can easily eat 4-5 dosas at a time. At lunch time, he takes a good amount of rice with plenty of curries. He likes bakery items much and hates fruits! It is so amazing for us that he is not at all an obese one. He always asks for more food and it is being provided because he is not having any serious health issues in the present moment. But there are times, he had vomited due to excessive eating (we think so)

very rare though. My question is, is this really a problem? Can this habit cause serious health issues later in his life? Or can we think that he has a better, more powerful 'agni'? Sir, please guide us with your valuable suggestions.

Regards,  
Ramkumar, Valancheri.

*Dear Ramkumar,*

*It is really difficult to give a precise answer to your question. There are different possibilities.*

- a. Your nephew may be having a hyperactive agni, as you suspected.*
- b. It may be a constitutional peculiarity and there may be nothing remarkable about it*
- c. It may be a result of worms.*
- d. It may be a result of some hormonal issue which needs evaluation.*

*In any case, your nephew needs a direct assessment. Please consult your nearby ayurvedist and follow up.*



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