

Review Article

Assessment of *Prakriti* to maintain the health condition and for the prevention of disease by the *Ayurvedic* Regimen

Rapolu Sunil Buchiramulu¹, Piyush Tripathi²

¹Junior Resident, Department of *Kriya Sharir*, Faculty of *Ayurveda*, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, 221005, India

²SR, Department of *Kriya Sharir*, Faculty of *Ayurveda*, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, 221005, India

***Corresponding author**

Rapolu Sunil Buchiramulu

Email: rapolusunil@gmail.com

Abstract: For fulfilling the *prayojana* of *Ayurveda* (to protect health of the healthy and to alleviate disorders in the diseased) there is need of knowledge of individual constitution, by knowing the *Prakriti* we can maintain our health and prevents the disease process by following the *Ayurvedic* Regimen which is suitable to *Prakriti*. The central tenet of the *Ayurveda* is that all the people are unique, having the individual constitution. According to *Ayurveda*, an individual's basic constitution determines predisposition to diseases as well as therapy and life-style regime to a large extent. So once his/her individual constitution detected than we can able to prevent and cure the disease stage by managing the diet, physical activities and psychological conditions according to individual constitution and predominant *Dosha*.

Keywords: *Ayurvedic* Regimen, Individual constitution, Predominant *Dosha*

INTRODUCTION

For getting The *Ayurvedic* Science's more Significant results, it is essential that everyone should know their constitutional type. Everybody's constitution is Unique. *Ayurveda* describes seven broad constitutional types (*Prakritis*) each with a varying degree of physiological, anatomical and psychological variations and predisposition to different diseases. Whereas western medicine has traditionally tended to take the view that all the people are less or more same and has attempted to treat the condition rather the patient suffering from it and they consider that everybody has same anatomy, physiology and pathological disease process does not take sufficient account of difference between the people but *Ayurveda* classify the people in different individual constitution (*Prakriti*) [1]. The constitutional types identified in *Ayurveda* are based on the physiological dominance of any single or a combination of two or three *Doshas* in an individual [2]. Several mutually opposite attributes have been ascribed to these *Doshas*, and each of these attributes produces a specific observable trait in the individual [3]. So once his/her individual constitution detected than we can able to prevent and cure the disease stage by managing the diet, physical activities and psychological conditions according to individual constitution and predominant *Dosha*.

ASSESSMENT OF PRAKRITI

The 'Self assessment questionnaire for determining *Prakriti*' developed in the department is useful to assess *Prakriti* of the individuals. This questionnaire is designed on the basis of the explanation found in *Caraka Samhita*, which in turn, is based on the specific attributes (*Gunas*) of a particular *Dosha* (*Ca.Vi.8/96-98*). In this context, *Caraka* has explained the particular attributes of a particular *Dosha* and the traits/characters these specific attributes (*Guna*) produce in an individual. Thus, *Vata* has eight, *Pitta* has five and *Kapha* has twelve *Gunas* in total. Further, each *Guna* is responsible for producing one or more traits/characters [4].

Thus, three *Doshas* possess neither equal number of *Gunas* nor do they produce equal number of characters / traits in the individuals. This situation compelled the investigator to adopt the self – assessment questionnaire originally developed by Tripathi PK et al., which expresses the dominance of each *Dosha* in terms of percentage and thus makes the comparison of *Doshik* dominance possible quantitatively. The said pro-forma has been designed in such a way that each trait/ character as described in *Caraka Samhita* (*Vimana Sthana*) has been converted into simple question/ statement keeping the original vision intact [3].

The respondents had to record their agreement or disagreement with the statement/question in a column provided for the purpose in the form of YES or NO. The scores to be allotted were specified against the statement in a separate column for a particular type of response. It was clearly mentioned that if the response of the individual was other than that mentioned in the column, the scores to be allotted were ZERO.

At the end of this exercise, the respondents could calculate the scores for different *Doshas* themselves and could understand the *Doshik* dominance in the form of percentage with the help of simple mathematical calculations. As the questionnaire was of 'Self-assessment' type, the respondents were not required to submit their completed questionnaires; instead, they were asked to record and submit the *Doshik* predominance in the form of percentage dominance. The advantage of doing so was that the respondents could answer all the questions honestly without having to face any embarrassing questions from the interviewer. Also, this helped them overcome any possible hesitation related to the divulgence of their personal details unnecessarily [3].

In this questionnaire, each *Guna* has been allotted a total of 120 scores. If a particular *Guna* produced a single trait/ character, full scores (120) are allotted to that character, if present in the individual. But, if a *Guna* produced more than one trait/character, then, 120 scores are divided equally into the specific number of characters/traits that the particular *Guna* produced. For example, if one *Guna* produced 4 traits, then 120 scores are divided by four resulting in 30 scores for each character.

According to the total number of *Gunas* that are associated with the particular *Dosha*, (i.e., *Vata* -8, *Pitta*-5, and *Kapha*-12), the total score comes to be 960 for *Vata*, 600 for *Pitta* and 1440 for *Kapha*. Percentage dominance of a *Dosha* in an individual was calculated on the basis of the total scores obtained for each *Dosha* by simple mathematical calculation as shown below:

$$\frac{\text{Total Marks scored by an individual for a Dosa}}{\text{Total marks allotted to that Dosa}} \times 100$$

In this manner, the percentage dominance of each *Dosha* in an individual was obtained [3].

DISCUSSION

The present article is aimed to assess the *Prakriti* for fulfilling the *Ayurveda's* aim by following the *Ayurvedic* Regimen. So the first requirement for achieving the *Ayurveda's* Aim is to assess the individuals *Prakriti*. There were too many questionnaires available for assessing the *Prakriti*. No questionnaire was exactly similar with another of its kind.

The questionnaires available were of the following types depending on who assessed the *Prakriti*:

- The questionnaires that required interrogation and clinical examination of the individual to be carried out by the physician
- The questionnaire that were of self-assessment type, where, the subjects themselves would fill up the questionnaire, and would decide their *Prakriti*.

The questionnaires were of following types based on the classical text book that they followed:

- Questionnaires which included all the descriptions available in all possible textbooks, especially, *Brihat Trayi* and *Laghu Trayi* (e.g., the questionnaire that is followed in the Ayurvedic educational institutions in Maharashtra.)
- Questionnaires that were based on only one classical *Ayurvedic* textbook.

The questionnaires were of following types based on the scoring system that was followed:

- Absolute scoring, where, some fixed scores are allotted for each response/ character / trait that is present in an individual
- Graded scoring, where, the scoring varied from zero to five (or four in a few) based on the strength of agreement / disagreement with the question/ statement.

The investigator administered each one of these questionnaire among few individuals as a preliminary exercise and noted that the results varied when the same individual was assessed on the basis of different questionnaires. The major problem that the investigator encountered was related to the cut – off levels of scoring. When the subject was to be considered as '*Ekadoshaja*' or '*Dvandvaja*' was not clear in most of the questionnaires. As every individual scored some scores in all three *Doshas*, the criteria to be adopted for identifying the *Dosha* that is/ are to be eliminated was not clear. Similarly, whether the most dominant *Dosha* was to be considered or the two most dominant *Doshas* were to be considered for designating one's *Prakriti* was also not clear.

To overcome these problems, the investigator finally decided to use the questionnaire that is prepared by Patwardhan K and Sharma R [7] and subsequently modified by Tripathi PK and others. This decision was taken on the following grounds:

Peculiarities of this questionnaire

- This questionnaire is based on a single textbook, i.e., *Caraka Samhita*, and thus,

overlapping and contradictory views of different authors are avoided.

- As Caraka's description of traits / characters is based on the specific attributes that a *Dosha* possesses. Each character can thus be ascribed to a particular attribute, whereas all other authors have enumerated different characters/traits of an individual belonging to a specific *Prakriti* randomly. Therefore, *Caraka's* explanation seems to have a sound logic and therefore, seems to be more scientific.
- As the said questionnaire is of 'Self-assessment' type, the respondents were not required to submit their completed questionnaires; instead, they were asked to record and submit the *Doshika* predominance in the form of percentage dominance. The advantage of doing so was that the respondents could answer all the questions honestly without having to face any embarrassing questions from the interviewer. Also, this helped them overcome any possible hesitation related to the divulgence of their personal details unnecessarily.
- The said questionnaire reported the dominance of a *Dosha* in terms of percentage, and therefore, the investigator can classify the individuals into '*Ekadoshaja*' or '*Dvandvaja*' [6].

Benefits of being known person of own prakriti type

Dietary and behavioural regimen to be followed to *vata prakriti* type:

- Avoid eating foods high in *Vata* and eat *Pitta* and *Kapha* increasing food, which are of sweet, sour and salt taste.
- Avoid hot and spicy food, and reduce your intake of nuts and seeds.
- Warm oil bath, massage of body, wrapping the body with cloth.
- With the supervision of an *Ayurvedic* practitioner, cleanse the digestive system and body with oils, salty liquids, *Ayurvedic* preparations and panchkarma(*snigdhosna basti*) methods regularly.
- Avoid excessive physical activities.

Dietary and behavioural regimen to be followed to *pitta prakriti* type:

- Drinking of *ghrta*, purgation therapy with drugs of sweet taste and cold potency.
- Eat *vata* and *kapha* increasing food, which are of sweet, bitter and astringent taste.
- Eat a high proportion of raw foods, i.e. salads, fruits and vegetables; avoid pickles, fizzy and acidic drinks and reduce your intake of fruit juice.
- Avoid excess alcohol, salt, tea and coffee.

- Indulgence in perfumes which are pleasing, coolant and cordial, wearing garlands of similar nature in the neck and gems on the chest.
- Anointing paste of *Karpura*, *Candana* and *Usira* over the body minute after minute, residing on terraces lit by moon light in the evening.
- Try to maintain a cool environment-bath in cool water.
- Swimming in cold water, taking walks in moonlight and living near water are all beneficial activities for *Pitta* types.
- Do not expose the body to too much sun.

Dietary and behavioural regimen to be followed to *kapha prakriti* type:

- Avoid eating foods high in *kapha*, which are dry, little in quantity, penetrating and hot, possessing pungent, bitter and astringent tastes.
- Avoid fatty and fried food, meat and meat products and excess oil.
- Avoid alcohol consumption and control addictions to sweet food.
- Take warm baths and wear warm clothing.
- Avoid excess sleep.
- Massage the body with *kapha* oils.
- Engage in daily physical activity.
- With the supervision of the *Ayurvedic* practitioner, cleanse the digestive system and body with rough (*ruksha*) substance and panchkarma(*vaman*) methods regularly [1, 5].

This is in respect of regimen of maintenance of health (for healthy persons), in respect of diseases, at such time based on the disease (as needed for effective treatment) [5].

CONCLUSION

The predominant *Dosha*, in turn reflects the main energies and qualities within the individual and their tendencies to either health or disease. There is no substitute for our own right living. It cannot be bought at any price and another person cannot provide it for us. As long as we are not living in harmony with our constitution we cannot expect to be really healed by any method. The beauty of *Ayurveda* is that it gives each one of us the knowledge and means to live in balance. It provides the right regimen for our particular type covering all aspect of our nature, physical, psychological and spiritual, therefore, affords us a methodology for preventing, as well as curing, disease. In this way *Ayurveda* fulfil its aim of to protect health of the healthy and to alleviate disorders in the diseased. So in this Review article we want to conclude only that each person should be know is *prakriti*, if he/she wants to take benefits of *Ayurveda* in excess and right way because each person is unique so each person has some

different regimen which may be more suitable to him/her.

REFERENCES

1. Godagama S; The handbook of *Ayurveda*. Kyle Cathie Limited, 23 Howland street, London, 1997.
2. Frawley D; *Ayurvedic healing A comprehensive guide*. Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, Delhi, 2000.
3. Tripathi PK, Patwardhan K, Singh G; The Basic Cardiovascular responses to postural changes, exercise and cold pressor test: Do they vary in accordance with the dual constitutional types of *Ayurveda*? Evid Based Complement Alternat Med., 2011; pii: 251850.
4. Sharma PV, *Carak Samhita* Part-I, Part-II, Part-III and Part-4, trans, *Chaukambha* oOrientalia, Varanasi, India, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1994.
5. Murthy KRS; *Vagbhata's Astanga Hridayam* (English translation), Volume 1, 4th edition, Krishnadas Academy, Chaukhamba Press, Varanasi, 1999.
6. Rapolu SB; A study of certain Autonomic Responses in clinically healthy individuals with special reference to *Deha Prakriti*. Thesis submitted to Department of *Kriyasharir*, IMS, Banaras Hindu University, 2013.
7. Patwardhan K, Sharma R; Prakriti: a self-assessment questionnaire. Journal of All India Sharir Research Institute, 2005; 1 (5): 11-16