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Role of *Hitahara* for *Dirghaayu* (longevity)

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ABSTRACT: Introduction: Ayurveda, the Science of Life, has given much importance to the preservation of health and the prevention of diseases. Naturally it has dealt very deeply the aspect of Hitahar in view of the social and climate conditions. According to Ayurveda 'Hitahara', should be taken in appropriate and moderate proportions and at proper time of the day. Here the word 'Hitahara' has a special meaning of food which keeps the person Dirghaayu. Hitahara (wholesome food) is one of the causes for the growth of living beings. A diet (Aahar) beneficial to nature-such as Shukdhanyas like Raktashali, Shamidhanyas like Mudga, Kanda like Adarka, Fruits like Draksha. Hitahara is responsible for complexion, clarity, quality of voice, longevity, genius, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect. Aim & Objectives: To study the concept of Hitahar for Dirghaayu. Materials & Methods: Information related to Hitahara and other relevant topics have been collected. The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtang Hridaya and available commentaries on these. Result & Discussion: Charaka acharya mentions that if we follow Hitahar daily, it is the best way to Dirghaayu. In current scenario people use to take diet as per high caloric, vitamins, protine etc. which disturb the Agni and produce the Ama further leads to early aging process due to increase toxin in body because of Ama. but in our Ayurveda diet should be as per the Guna and Prakruti of individual which is not disturb the Agni and people make healthy long life. Conclusion: Based on Samhitas, it can be concluded that the concept of Hitahara. Maintain the equilibrium of body dhatus and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium are to be regarded as Hitahara. Is Important in longevity.

KEYWORDS: Hitahar, Dirghaayu, Dravya, Agni.

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INTRODUCTION:

According to Ayurveda '*Hitahara*', should be taken in appropriate and moderate proportions and at proper time of the day. Here the word '*Hitahara*' has a special meaning of food which keeps the person *Dirghaayu*. *Hitahara* (wholesome food) is one of the causes for the growth of living beingsⁱ. If such *Hitahar* is taken in proper quantities it would be 'beneficial', otherwise small quantity of food would be insufficient for nutrition while heavy meals would definitely cause indigestion. The term longevity means length of life span or maximum span of life with respect to age factor. *Maha Pani*(hand), *Pada*(foot), *Skanda*(shoulder), *Lalata* (Forehead), *Roma* (hair follicles) etc. are *Dirghayu* *Lsakhana* used in classics to explain the health status of individual. *Ahar* is considered essential for the body because it provide basic nutrients, that are necessary to carry out the basic requirement of digestion and metabolism, since diet is responsible for the status of *Agni*ⁱⁱ (digestive enzymes). Most of the diseases are caused by *Mandagni*ⁱⁱⁱ that is due to improper diet. Also said that whatever food we eat affects mind in accordance with its basic qualities.

Ayurvedic concept of Aahar

Ayurveda gives emphasis to *Prakruti* or body constitution on consideration of food intake. Three basic *Dosha Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* forms seven type of *Prakruti*^{iv}. In this world each person is a unique. For this reason, all the natural and good *Aahar* (diet) can't be suitable to all individual to the same extent. Every individual should take diet suitable to his predominant constitutional *Dosha*'s to balance them in different ways.

Ayurvedic concept of Agni

Items of food like Sali, swastika, mudga etc.; - even though light indigestion by nature are to be taken according to the measurement prescribed. But from this it should not be concluded that the description of heaviness

or lightness does not carry any importance. Because the light food articles are predominant in the qualities of *vayu* and *agni* and heavy one in *Pruthvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta*.

Effect of Guru and Laghu Guna

It is mentioned in *Hemadri* as *Yasya Bruhane Shakti* is *Guru*. *Brumhana Karma* is usually found in *Dhatu*s. But before reaching *Dhatu*, *Dhavya* should undergo *JatharagniPaka*. *Guru Dravya* consumes maximum *Agni* for its transformation. Among the *Gun*as, *Guru-Laghu Gun*as should be selected based on *Agni*. Even in *Matrashiteeya*, it is mentioned '*Guroonam Ardha Sauhityam*' and in *Agrya Dravya* list '*Guru Bhojanam Durvipak Karaanam*' which gives the same clue. Thus, while selecting *Dravya* for the treatment, initially one should decide the *Agni* and then select the *Dravya* with *Guru* or *Laghu Guna*. Thus, this pair of *Guna* is most important to select the proper *Dravya* in terms of '*Pachana*'. *Pachana* is proper for healthy person and health is very import for longevity.

Eight factors determining food utility**1.Prakriti (food's initial quality)**

It is often referred to as the qualities of nature, *swabhava*. *Prakriti* is the addition of natural qualities to substances used as nourishment (*Guru*, *Laghu*, *Sheeta*, *Ushna*, *Ruksadi*). The quantity and combinations of food consumed are determined by the *aahar's Guruta* and *Laghuta* (*Samyoga*).

• Laghu Aahar:

Since *Laghu Aahar* is easily absorbed, it digests more quickly.

Sali rice, green gram (*Vigna radiata*), deer meat (*Cervidae*), common quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), and grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) are a few examples of foods eaten in *Laghu*.

• Guru Aahar:

Guru Aahar requires extra time to digest due to its *Guruta*.

Black gram (*Vigna mungo*), pig meat (*Sus scrofa domestica*), and buffalo meat (*Bubalus bubalis*) are a few examples of guru dietary items^v.

2. Karana (creating particular/odd traits through food preparation and cooking)

Food Processing and Preparation Techniques *Karana Sanskar*, in particular, is the term used to describe the preparation or processing of food that results in changes to its properties. There are several ways to accomplish this, depending on the location, time, and kind of utensil used, including washing, infusing, churning, steeping, or coming into contact with fire and water. It comprises techniques that are nearly identical to *Karana/Sanskara* in current science, such as thermal, mechanical, industrial (ultra-processed food), and technical (soaking, fermentation, fortification, enrichment, substitution, supplementation, and germination/malting)^{vi, vii, viii}.

3. Samyoga (combination of food items)

Samyoga is the combination/mixing of dietary ingredients that produces one or more unique characteristics (which may have positive or negative effects) that are typically not observed in separate ones. According to Ayurveda, an "incompatible diet" or "viruddha aha" is a condition that disrupts a tissue's metabolism and inhibits the process of tissue creation. The six rasas—Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, and Kashaya—are listed and suggested in Ayurveda to be consumed in order to guarantee that the body receives the right nutrition.

4. Rasi (quantity)

Here "Rasi" refers to the amount of food. There are two methods to observe it:

- *Sarvagraha*

The amount of food consumed in its whole is thought to be beneficial to general health.

- *Parigraha*:

This is the amount of food that is consumed in each entity. Being *Ati matra*, it may contribute to obesity and malnourishment.

5. Desh (place of origin of food)

It indicates the food's origin as well as the body that consumes it. The word "*Desh Satmyata*" refers to the same location where people live and are accustomed to the food and medicinal herbs found there.

6. Kala (time factor)

According to *Ayurveda*, it depends on the patient, s age or the disease's stage. Kala is separated even further into:

- *Nityaga* (Moving): It denotes seasonal appropriateness.
- *Awasthika* (conditional): This depends on the illness's stage.

7. Upayoga sanstha (rules of intake)

The *Upayoga Sanstha* demonstrates the guidelines for eating. It is dependent on the signs of food digestion. It is recommended that one start a diet once their previous meal has finished digesting. All of *Aahar Vidhi*'s descriptions are included in the *Upayoga sanstha*.

8. Upayokta (user)

It is the person who uses food, or the user. According to Charaka, food should never be consumed out of pure greed or as a result of temptation, especially when it comes to eating unhealthy cuisine^{ix}.

Recommended food to be taken daily given classical texts^{x, xi}

Sr.No	Dravya	Latin Name	Guna	Karma
1.	<i>Sali</i>	<i>Oryza sativa</i>	<i>Madhura rasa, Laghu, Snighdha, Sheeta virya</i>	<i>Balya</i>

2.	Godhuma	<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	Madhura rasa, Guru, Snighdha, Sheeta virya	Vrishya, Jivaniya
3.	Yava	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>	Madhura rasa, Ruksha, Guru, Sara, Sheeta virya	Vrishya
4.	Sunisannaka	<i>Marsilea minuta</i>	Madhura Kashaya rasa, Sheeta, Laghu, Ruksha	Vrishya, Deepan
5.	Jivanti	<i>Leptadenia reticulata</i>	Madhura rasa, Snighdha, Laghu, Seeta virya	Tridosahara, Rasayana
6.	Bala mulka	Tender tubers of <i>Raphanus sativus</i>	Katu rasa, Laghu	Tridosahara
7.	Ardrak	<i>Zinziber officinale</i>	Katu Rasa, Guru, Ruksha, Tikсна, Ushna	Dipana, Hridya, Rochana
8.	Haritaki	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Kashaya rasa, Ruksha, Ushna virya, Laghu	Rasayana, Brumhana, Anuloman
9.	Amalaki	<i>Embllica officinalis</i>	Amla rasa, Ruksha, Laghu, Seetavirya	Vrishya, Rasayana,
10.	Dadima	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Madhura rasa, Laghu, Grahi, Snighdha	Medhya, Balya, Sukrala
11.	Mudga	<i>Phaseolus radiatus</i>	Madhura rasa, Ruksha, Laghu, Grahi, Seetavirya	
12.	Patola	<i>Trichosanthes cucumerina</i>	Tikta rasa, Laghu, Snighdha, Ushna,	Hridya, Vrishya, Tridoshghna
13.	Draksha	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	Madhura rasa, Sara, Guru, Seeta virya	Brumhana, Vrishya
14.	Ghee		Madhura rasa, Seeta, Guru, Snighdha	Vrishya, Medhya, Balya, Rasayana

Material and Methods:

Various books on *Hitahar*, classical texts like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtang Hrudya* and Published research articles were reviewed to collect the information related to *Hitahar* use of *Dirgayu* (longevity).

DISCUSSION:

Role of Agni in Hitahara

When a person consumes food, it is converted into *Ahara Rasa* with the help of *Jatharagni*. Then *Dhathvagni* creates the nourishment of

Sapta Dhatu by converting *Ahara rasa* into *Sapta Dhatu*. It makes the longevity in each and every individual with clear complexion and power.

Effect of Hitahara on Dhirghayu

Brumhana Karma is usually found in *Dhatus*. But before going *Dhatu*, *Dravya* should undergo *Jatharagni Paka*. Like *Guru Dravya* consumes maximum *Agni* for its transformation. In *Hitahara Laghu, Snigdha, Ushna Guna Pradhan Dravya* should be

consider. *Guna* of *Dravya* should be selected based on *Agni*. But in today's scenario nobody is eating by seeing the *Ahara Dravya Guna* and *Agni* of individual. So because of *Ahitahara* *Agni* will disturb and *Ama* formation take place and finally the mostly *Rasavahastrotas Dushti* occur which is caused of *Vali*, *Pali* means premature aging. And in *Agrya Dravya Suchi* Thus, while selecting *Dravya* for the *Ahardravya*, I initially one should decide the *Agni* and then select the *Dravya* with its *Guna*. This pair of *Guna* is most important to select the proper *Dravya* in terms of *Pachana*.

Eight factors determining food utility

Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatanaani the special conditions for consumption of food. These conditions play a major role in selection and intake of our food, helps us know about the wholesomeness of food and also the foods. We need to take, the quantity, quality and combination of different foods, the place and time related to food and the rules to be followed while consuming foods. Therefore it becomes very important for everyone to know these conditions thoroughly. We should live a healthy life, where we eat's balanced diet.

Recommended food to be taken daily given classical texts

Nitya Sevaniya Dravya are the combination of those substances which are balanced in their properties. E.g. cow milk is *Laghu* than buffalo milk. So, they don't excessively aggravate any property in the body when consumed in proper quantity. Most of *Depaniya*, *Laghu* and *Tridoshaghna* useful for maintenance of normal status *Agni* and *Dosha*. *Nitya Sevaniya Dravya* most of *Vrishya*, *Jivaniya*, *Tridoshahara*, *Rasayana*, *Brumhana*, *Anuloman*, *Medhya karma* *Rasayana* and *Vrishya karma* effect of *Dirghayu*. Acharya Charak mention Ghee is *Nitaya Sevaniya Dravya*. These food increase *Rasa Dhatu*. Since *Rasa* is the first *Dhatu*, it nourishes all the deeper *Dhatu* and becomes a precursor

for other *Dhatu* nutrition. These foods increase both the quality and quantity of the *Dhatu*. A person undergoing *Rasayana Dravya* attains *Dirghayu*, *Medhya*, *Arogya*, *Prabha* and excellent potentially of the body and sense-organs, *Vak-Siddhi*.

CONCLUSION:

Based on critical analysis, it can be stated that Ayurveda gives great importance to **Hitahara** (wholesome diet) and the role of **Agni** in digestion for achieving **Dirghayu** (long and healthy life). Hitaahara helps in maintaining the balance of **Doṣas**, proper nourishment of body tissues, and smooth elimination of waste products. When food is taken at the right time and in the right quantity, it is properly digested by *Agni* and does not produce **Ama**, which is considered the main cause of many diseases. Therefore, Hitaahara plays an important role in maintaining good health and longevity. Ayurveda also explains that Hitahara is not the same for everyone. It should be decided according to individual factors such as **Prakṛti** (body constitution), **Karāṇa** (method of food preparation), **Saṁyoga** (food combinations), **Rasi** (quantity of food), **Desa** (place or region), and **Kala** (time and season). These factors directly affect digestion and metabolism. Even healthy food can cause problems if it is not suitable for a person's constitution or is taken in an improper way. Thus, Hitahara is useful not only in the treatment of diseases but also in their prevention. It helps in preserving positive health and improving quality of life. By following the principles of Hitahara and maintaining balanced *Agni*, Ayurveda aims to promote long life, good health, and overall well-being, which together fulfill the goal of **Dirghayu**.

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