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Advantages of use of single drug: Perspective of Ayurveda

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Abstract

Drugs used in the practice of Ayurveda are of different origin. Drugs, in Ayurveda, are given in different forms and formulations. It is given both in single drug form and combination drug form. Choice of method depends on need and this need depends on patient condition, disease condition etc. both of this method have advantages and disadvantages but in my view use of single drug will be more beneficial in the view of different aspects like availability, effectiveness, cost effectiveness etc. in this paper all the aspects are tried to discuss which make use of single drugs more beneficial.

Keywords: Perspectiv, Ayurveda, drugs

Introduction

Ayurveda is an ultimate science related to health. There are different kinds of drugs described in Ayurveda. Some are of metallic origin while some are of plant origin. Drugs of animal origin are also significantly described and used. These drugs act on the basis of the principles of Ayurveda. Each drug has its own properties on the basis of which they perform their actions. These drugs either used single or used in different combination of each other. In both of these cases the drugs are effective and beneficial. Practice of both of these types of drugs is popular since ancient time. Use of single drug, either of plant and animal origin or of metallic origin, has its own advantages in respect of effectiveness, cost effectiveness, palatability etc. In this paper it is tried to explore different advantages of use of single drugs.

Types of substances on the basis of action ^[1]

On the basis of action three types of drugs are used-

- 1. Dosh-Prashaman:** These type of substances are used for the alleviation or purification of vitiated dosha of body. These are of high clinical uses and directly used substances as drugs. The concept of Ayurveda is that the vitiation process in any component of body is the result of vitiated dosha and dosha get vitiated due to unwholesome diet and regimen. These drugs pacify or alleviate vitiated dosha so that other components of body become healthy or remain healthy. Actually these substances fall under the category of medicine or drugs.
- 2. Dhātu-Pradooshnam:** These substances vitiates or make the 'Dhātu' of body unhealthy. Dhātu' are the structural and functional component of body. Vitiating in 'Dhātu' leads to disease formation in body. These substances or regimen fall under the category of causative factors of diseases.
- 3. Swasthavrittāu:** These substances are beneficial for the body. It may vary from person to person, climate and time. These substances are wholesome for body because they maintain the structural and functional integrity of body. They fulfil requirements of body.

In nut shell there are three types of substances- one is for maintenance of health, second one is for genesis of disease and third one is to cure the diseases.

Types of drugs on the basis of origin

On seeing the different literature of Ayurveda, three types of drugs are seen on the basis of origin

- 1. Drugs of plant origin:** Most of the drugs described in Ayurveda in ancient literature are of plant origin. These are obtained from different parts of plants. Sometimes particular part of plant is used while sometimes whole plant is used for medicinal purposes. These plants are of very wide range in reference to size,

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geographical distribution and life period. Each plant carry its own characteristic like 'Rasa', 'Guna', 'Veerya', 'vipaka', and 'Prabhav'. With the help of these characteristics they perform their functions. Actually these are the different modes of action of Ayurvedic drugs.

2. **Drugs of animal origin:** there are a lot of drugs of animal origin which are used as medicine for human being like, shells of coral, shell of egg of hen, milk of different animals, urine of different animal etc. Some of these drugs are described in the same fashion as drugs of plant origin while other's characteristics are defined in the terms of 'Prabhav' only.
3. **Drugs of metallic origin:** During the course of time, a need of new kind of drugs were generated. In Vedic and samhita period of time, there were predominance of drugs of plant origin but later availability and efficacy of metallic drugs forced the clinicians of Ayurveda to use such kind of drugs. The use of such drugs increased very much in later period and a new branch in Ayurveda developed named as 'Rasasastra'. These drugs have metal and metalloid as their constituent.

Advantages of Single drug-

1. **In understanding the mode of action of drugs:** There are many thoughts regarding individual drug mode of action in a formulation or group of drugs. But no any thought is universally accepted due to inaccuracy. Sometimes drugs behave expectedly and sometimes not, after coming in combination with other drug. Therefore, if we will try to understand mode of action of any drug in combination then chances of failure will be more. So, in the field of Ayurveda, mode of action of a drug can be exactly understand only when it is used single.
2. **In cost effectiveness:** Use of single drug is always cheaper than use of combination of many drugs due to involvement of many drug and a preparatory procedure. Some scholar says that doses of different drugs are less in combination so cost will remain same in totality but it does not seem true in most of the cases. Because number effect more than dose and also there will be a preparatory procedure which increases cost many fold.
3. **In palatability:** Both single drug and combination of drugs may be good as well bad in reference to palatability. But the difference is that we can prescribe single drugs in different forms or formulation but this kind of prescription is not much feasible in the case of combination of drugs.
4. **In availability:** It is a big issue for Ayurvedic drugs. Classical drugs are not available everywhere as like modern drugs. Some of the patented drugs and most of the single drug can be obtained in most of the places. Therefore practice of single drug will not not be beneficial for patient and doctors but also it will help in popularisation and spreading of Ayurveda worldwide because it will aid more people to Ayurveda who are not getting Ayurvedic drugs their nearby.
5. **In effectiveness:** If exact diagnosis of cause and pathogenesis is made for any disease or patient then use of single drug will be very effective in the reference of its speed of action. Because single drug is easy to digest and if drug is accurate then symptoms will quickly be relieved due to fast and accurate response of drug.

6. **In prevention of side effects of drugs:** In a combination of drug, always there will be more chances of side effects due to involvement of many drugs. Some says that many drugs counteract the side effect of each other but if the drugs will act in this fashion then they may also counteract the action of each other. Definitely there is action of each drug in a combination. If drug of choice is correct then most of these actions will be beneficial but if drug of choice is not correct then many of these actions will resemble as side effect of combination. It is also true for use of single drug but chances are less because of accuracy and less number of functions of a single drug.

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