

## Importance of *Pancha Nidana* as a diagnostic tool in modern era

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### ABSTRACT

*Pancha Nidanais* very important diagnostic tool in the field of *Ayurveda* which comprises five components *Nidan*(Aetiology), *Purvarupa*(Prodromal Symptoms), *Rupa*(Signs), *Upashaya* (Therapeutic methods), and *Samprapti* (Pathogenesis), plays an important role as a diagnostic tool for the assessment of diseases. *Pancha Nidana* plays a crucial role in enhancing a physician's knowledge of the disease process and improving the determination of appropriate treatment methods. Modern medicine gives more importance to the specific treatment whereas ancient system of Indian Medicine gives more importance towards holistic treatment. *Ayurveda* has a holistic and person centric approach towards health & disease which in turn necessitates consideration of several factors in the process of a diagnosis. The concept of *Pancha Nidana* offers a valuable approach to healthcare that is relevant in the modern era. Developing and validating diagnostic tools for disease enumerated in *Ayurvedic* classical texts can help in standardizing the clinical approach even when attempting to arrive at a patient specific diagnosis.

**Keywords:** Diagnosis, *Pancha Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Samprapti*, *Upashaya*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Diagnosis play an important tasks which is being performed by primary care physicians which have important inferences for patient care, research & health policy. WHO recently listed patient safety areas especially in primary care and included diagnostic errors as a high urgency problem<sup>1</sup>. Excessive health care testing, medication or procedures leads to high cost investigation instead of appropriate treatment, despite of extensive investigation and advanced diagnostic criteria, still understanding the etiopathogenesis remain elusive in modern practice. Diagnostic error is most frequent in modern practice but still represent an underrated & understudied area of patient safety. Defeating and dissecting diagnostic error is the need of era. Modern medicine gives more importance to the specific treatment while ancient system of Indian medicine gives more importance to holistic treatment. *Ayurveda* has a holistic and person centric approach towards health & disease. Developing and validating diagnostic tools for disease enumerated in *Ayurvedic* classical texts can help in standardizing the clinical approach. In *Ayurveda*, due to its holistic and patient centric approach, diagnosis involves assessment of several subjective & objective parameters pertaining to disease as well as patient.

In the current era, the *Pancha Nidana* considered one of the most valuable diagnostic tools in the practice of *Ayurveda*. In this modern era, *Pancha Nidana* is highly efficient tool for the diagnosis and prognosis of the disease. In *Ayurveda*, there are five means of diagnosis (*Pancha Nidana*) known as *Nidan* (cause or etiology), *Purvarupa* (prodromal symptoms or premonitory symptoms), *Rupa* (specific sign and symptoms or clinical features), *Upasaya* (relieving and aggravating factors), *Samprapti* (pathogenesis). For the treatment of any disease, it is necessary to make a proper diagnosis of the disease. The *Ayurvedic* diagnostic basis is of two types comprising *Roga Pareeksha* and *Rogi Preeksha* separately<sup>2</sup>.

Analysis of disease is *Roga pareeksha*. It involves the investigation of the features and etiology of the disease. *Pancha Nidanais* considered a crucial aspect of *Roga Pareeksha* in determining the existence of illness. After having complete knowledge of *Roga*, the physician should carry on *Rogi Pareeksha*. Observation of clinical features, examination of the body, body parts, fluids or body elements comes under *rogi pareeksha*. *Trividha*, *Chaturvidha*, *Astavidha*, *Dashavidha pareeksha* and *Shadvidha pareeksha* are used for *rogi pareeksha*. By this concept of *Pancha Nidana*, one can diagnose the disease at an earlier stage and henceforth can plan for the treatment and avoid additional complications<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To explore the concept of Importance of *Pancha Nidana* as a diagnostic tool in modern era.

## 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Descriptions related to *Pancha Nidana* as a diagnostic tool were collected from different Ayurvedic literature, modern texts as well as the data bases Google scholar, PubMed, AYUSH Research Portal, DHARA, studies available on Research Gate web-based search engines, journal, were used to searched and presented in an organized manner.

## 4. RESULT

Acquiring clinical history and interviewing the patient will be helpful not only to understand the evolution of disease process and its nature but also provides information for determining the diagnosis. Limited clinical visit may lead to an incomplete picture of a patient's relevant history & genesis of disease which contributes various diagnostic errors such as misdiagnosis; alter diagnosis, error in advising high cost and volume investigation as well as medication. Such type of diagnostic error is frequent in modern clinical practice which needs to be defeated & dissected.

*Ayurveda* is highly systematized medical system resting on proven theories, documented clinical observation with unbroken & successfully continuing clinical practice. The fundamental principle of etiopathogenesis and diagnosis is based on *Doshic Siddhanta*. Emphasis has been given on understanding the evolution of disease based on the concept of *Pancha Nidana* rather than only identifying the disease based on some diagnostic parameter<sup>4</sup>. Holistic approach of *Ayurveda* has lay emphasized on restoration of physiology of bodily system and regularity of afflicted *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* instead of only to provide relief of symptoms.

### Importance of *Pancha Nidana*

The concept of *Pancha Nidana* indicates about manifestation and progression of the disease and helps in disease identification. *Nidana* provides an understanding of the disease and recommendations for avoiding contributing factors. *Pancha Nidana* has been recognized as the most ideal evaluating diagnostic tool consisting of five tools such as *Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Upasaya*, and *Samprapti* which provides a comprehensive knowledge about the disease<sup>5</sup>. Knowledge of underlying causes, or *Nidana*, of a disease, is essential for a physician in determining the potential outcome or prognosis, can help determine the chronicity of the disease and also preventing the development of further complications associated with a disease. The progressive stage of the disease is known as *Samprati*, and it is crucial to intervene promptly to prevent its further advancement.

### *Nidana* (Etiological factors)

*Nidana* is the causative factor of the disease. In the traditional *Ayurvedic* system, *Nidan* plays a crucial role in determining the root cause of disease and guiding the treatment process. *Nidan* means one which aggravates *Vatadi Doshas*. It may be due to the consumption of incompatible dietetics and improper activities. *Nidana* offers comprehensive details about the disease i.e., etiology, symptomatology, and pathogenesis.

*Nidana* gives a clue about the intensity of the *Dosha* aggravation and chronicity of the disease. Detail history of the disease such as types, duration of intake, intensity etc. will be helpful for prognosis of the disease. Intensity of disease depend upon the intensity of *Nidana Sevana* and duration of intake in relation to other supporting factors such as *Prakriti*, *Vaya*, *Desha Prabhava*, *Kala Prabhava* etc. Based on the knowledge of *Dosha* predominance from concern *Nidana Dosha Pratyanka Cikitsa* can be advised. Holistic approach of *Ayurveda* lays emphasis on '*Nidana Parivarjana*' which is to be

administered in various stages such as from the early stage for prevention in due course of disease for reducing intensity and even after the disease for eradication of recurrence or any secondary manifestation<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Clinical significance of *Nidana***

- ✓ Helps in identifying causes of disease
- ✓ To make the correct diagnosis.
- ✓ Correct the causative remedies of the disease

The purpose of *Nidana* is to determine the root cause of the disease and understand the pathogenesis by assessing the involvement of *Doshas*. One of the benefits of *Nidan* in the modern era is that it provides a more personalized approach to healthcare. By considering a wide range of factors. This results in more effective treatments and a better overall outcome.

#### ***Purvarupa* (Prodromal features)**

*Purvarupa* are the premonitory symptoms produced before the actual manifestation of the disease. Amalgamation of vitiated *Dosha* and susceptible *Dhatu* produce certain unclear symptoms which indicate the forthcoming disease which are fewer and not clearly mentioned or feebly manifested indicates the onset of a disease before more diagnostically specific signs and symptoms develop<sup>7</sup>.

*Purvarupa* helps in the diagnosis of disease, identifying the disease, and also to prevent the disease process. In *Ayurveda*, the early recognition of *Purvarupa* symptoms is considered a crucial factor in preventing the progression of a disease. By identifying premonitory symptoms, practitioners can take proactive measures to prevent the onset of the disease or reduce its severity. It may involve making lifestyle adjustments, dietary modifications, or utilizing herbal remedies to address the underlying imbalances in the body.

*Purvarupa* can be classified as:

##### ❖ ***Samanya purvarupa*** (General symptoms)

*Samanya Purvarupa* indicates the forth coming disease but don't give any idea about *Dosha* Predominance. Example - fatigue and weakness in case of fever.

##### ❖ ***Vishisth purvaupa*** (Specific Manifestation)

The appearance of premonitory symptoms is observed specifically by specific *Doshas*. Examples – *Jrimba* (yawning) in *Vatika* fever, *Nayandaha* (burning sensation in eyes) in *Pitika* fever, and *Aannabhilasa* (anorexia) in *Kaphaja* fever<sup>8</sup>.

*Vishista Purvarupa* is neither related to *Dosha* nor *Dusya* related feature. *Charaka Samhita* the great compendia of *Ayurveda* lay emphasis on keen observation of *Purvarupa* from prognosis point of view and describes some prodromal features in context of some disease in *Indriya Sthana* which has been seen entirely different from etiopathogenesis of the patient and these features are recognized as bad prognostic feature<sup>9</sup>. Again when all the *Purvarupa* in reference disease as prescribed in text are manifested in full-fledged form even continue in actual stage of the disease then it indicate bad prognosis of the disease or its incurability<sup>10</sup>. Prodromal stage or *Purvarupavastha* is considered as one of the earlier *Kriyakala* or most suitable time to intervene in the disease<sup>11</sup>.

#### **Clinical significance of *Purvarupa***

- ✓ For the diagnosis of disease
- ✓ For differential diagnosis
- ✓ For the treatment of disease
- ✓ For the prognosis of the disease

The knowledge of *Purvarupa* not only provides a brief idea about the upcoming disease and in identifying the disease in its earliest form but also with the help of early intervention it prevents disease process & progress.

#### ***Rupa* (Signs and Symptoms)**

Symptoms when fully manifested are called *Lingam*. Synonyms – *lingam, Aakriti, Lakshana, Chinha, Sansthana, Vyanjana*. E.g., Burning sensation in the shoulder, sides of the chest, hands, and feet and fever is the cardinal symptom of *Rajyakshma* (Tuberculosis), excessive unclean urination in *Prameha* (Diabetes)<sup>12</sup>. Signs and symptoms of the fully manifested disease indicating the specific characteristics of disease like the dominance of *Dosha*, various stages of disease such as *Amavastha, Pachyamanavastha* or *Pakvavastha* etc. Knowledge of invariable symptoms related to any disease will be helpful in correct diagnosis among manifestation of all possible diseases, involves in distinguishing a particular disease or condition from others that present with similar clinical features. A sign is an objective, observable phenomenon that can be identified by another person where as a symptom is a subjective experience presented by the patient. Keen observation of both signs & symptoms and its nature, time of manifestation etc. will be helpful in differential diagnosis and arriving at a definite conclusion.

According to *Ayurvedic* fundamental principle in most of the cases confirm diagnosis based on *Dosha Pradhanya* will be made on the basis of subjective features. *Ayurveda* also lay emphasis on keen observation of signs & symptoms and other related diagnostic features to evaluate the more or most predominant *Dosha* while one or more *Dosha* are involved in genesis of disease.. A comprehensive knowledge about signs & symptoms of respective disease and their keen observation by any mean will be helpful to make confirm diagnosis followed by differential diagnosis of the disease<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Classification of rupa**

- ✓ *Lakshana* (symptoms) – symptom is a manifestation of disease experienced and perceived by the patient, acting as subjective evidence of the disease. For example, thirst, hunger, sleep, etc.
- ✓ *Chinha* (signs) – sign is a manifestation of the disease observed by a physician, serving as objective evidence of the disease. For example, the color of the eyes, skin, skin rash, edema, etc.

#### **Clinical significance of rupa**

- ✓ For diagnosis of disease
- ✓ For Differential Diagnosis of Disease
- ✓ For prognosis of disease
- ✓ For detection of cause

*Rupa* indicates the nature of *Dosha Dushya Samurchana* and helps to provide information about vitiated *Dosha* and the qualities of its vitiation. It specifies the site of actual pathology in the body. It helps in the confirmation of disease, differential diagnosis as well as prognosis of the disease. *Rupas* produced at various stages of the disease allow timely intervention and help in avoiding the future course of the disease.

#### **Upashaya (Therapeutical method)**

The trial with medicines, diet, and daily regimen producing specific beneficial effects by acting directly or indirectly against etiological factors, the process of a disease, or the disease itself, is known as *Upashaya*. The trial with medicines, diet, and daily regimen producing specific beneficial effects by acting directly or indirectly against etiological factors, the process of a disease, or the disease itself, is known as *Upashaya*. The practices of using medicine, diet, and regimens that result in an improvement in one's mood and sense of well-being are referred to as *Upasaya*. It offers comfort to individuals by utilizing various forms of treatment, nutrition, and routine. It is a trial and error method in diagnosing a disease when the signs and symptoms of the disease are concealed or simile with many ailments making it difficult to diagnose a given condition. The concealed symptoms of a disease are examined with the help of *Upasaya* and *Anupsaya*<sup>14</sup>.

*Upasaya* means relieving factor and *Anupsaya* is non relieving factors of a disease. Concept of *Upasaya* will be helpful in differential diagnosis of a disease. For ex the pain in the *Janu Sandhi* may raise doubt in the mind of the physician regarding its diagnosis as *Amavata* or *Sandhivata*. *Sthanika Taila Prayoga* as *Upasaya* will result in clarity of diagnosis. If the patient gets relief then it is

diagnosed as *Sandhivata*. On the other hand even if the medicines or dietary regimen having similar attribute to disease they produce relief of the symptoms are also considered as *Upasaya*. For ex. *Randia dumetorum* having emetic action and in real sense should worsen the vomiting episodes but still administered in *Vamana Karma*. *Vamana Karma* is done as a remedy for some diseases to induce vomiting<sup>15</sup>.

#### **Clinical significance of *Upasaya***

- ✓ For Diagnosis of Disease

The concept of *Upasaya* not only serves as a diagnostic tool and helps in differential diagnosis of a disease but also to plan and implement proper diet & life style practices ideal for combating a disease on the basis of trial & error method. A judicious application of medicine, diet and lifestyle are advised as *Hetu Viparita* (opposite to the cause of disease), *Vyadhi Viparita* (opposite to the disease itself), *Hetuvyadhi Viparita* (opposite to both cause of the disease and also to the disease), *Hetu Viparitarthakari* (Similar to the cause of the disease), *Vyadhi Viparitarthakari* (similar to the disease itself), *Hetuvyadhi Viparitarthakari* (similar to both cause of the disease and disease itself)<sup>16</sup>.

#### ***Samprapti* (Pathogenesis)**

The process of appearance of disease by the provoked *Doshas* which are circulating all over the body is *Samprapti*. It is to get the proper knowledge about the pathway of disease manifestation. This provides complete knowledge of the disease development stages, starting from the causes to the final stage of an investigation, this approach considers the role of *Doshas* as well as the location where the imbalance prompt (*Dushya*). *Samprapti* as *Vyadhi Bodhaka Nidana* provides the complete knowledge about subsequent process involved in the etiopathogenesis of disease. It indicated how a disease is formed including the entire process right from the exposure to causative factors up to manifestation of disease feature<sup>17</sup>.

*Samprapti* gives a comprehensive knowledge about *Dosha Kriyakala* (*Dosha Sanchaya, Prakopa & Prasara*) and *Vyadhi Kriyakala* (*Sthana Samsraya, Vyakta & Bhedavastha*). *Samprapti* is of five types such as *Sankhya Samprapti, Pradhanya Samprapti, Vidhi Samprapti, Vikalpa Samprapti, Bala Samprapti, and Kala Samprapti*<sup>18</sup>.

The broad vision of holistic treatment in *Ayurveda* aims in restoration of equilibrium of *Dhatu* involved as etiopathogenic factor in the evolution process of the disease i.e. restoration of systemic function which can be achieved by administration of treatment principle as per *Samprapti* but not to deal the disease as per symptoms only. Understanding the etiopathogenesis of disease as per fundamental of *Samprapti* will provide multidimensional opportunity not only to evaluate the disease such as keen diagnosis, prognosis but also to make complete abolition of pathogenesis, prevention & eradication of disease, its recurrence (*Punaravartana*), secondary manifestation (*Nidanarthakara Roga*) and complications (*Upadrava*) even of advancement of knowledge in research.

The knowledge of *Samprapti* is essential because it gives a precise and comprehensive picture of the nature of the disease. *Samprapti* is a process of understanding the progression of the disease by vitiated *Doshas* which are constantly circulating inside the body. It is also known as *Jati, Agati*. *Samprapti* means knowing the factors which are liable for the genesis of a disease and not only knowing the disease.

#### **Clinical Importance of *Pancha Nidana***

- ✓ Identification of *Pancha Nidana* helps to plan appropriate treatment.
- ✓ Knowledge of *Pancha Nidana* suggests chronic illness of disease.
- ✓ *Pancha Nidana* concept refers to manifestations and progression of ongoing disease.
- ✓ Early diagnosis prevents further complications of the disease.
- ✓ *Nidana* not only gives an idea of disease but also suggests factors to avoid.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The concept of *Pancha Nidana* gives a comprehensive knowledge which summarizes the genesis of disease in all aspect, detail about the etiopathogenic factors involved in disease process, their root in detail from evolution up to manifestation, possible secondary manifestation & complication etc. The



understanding of the disease in terms of *Nidana* (etiology), *Dosha* (Dysfunction) and *Dusya* (target tissue) as well as the stages of progress of the disease can be play crucial role in rational approach of therapeutic measure<sup>19</sup>.

In *Ayurveda*, good knowledge of *purvarupa* can help the doctor to prevent the disease from developing in early stage as treatment at this stage would require minimal or simpler modalities. The *Rupa* phase is useful for specific treatment planning. *Upashaya* plays an important role in the diagnosis as well as the treatment of diseases. *Samprapti* provides knowledge of the induced *doshas*, disease pathways, associated *dhatu*s and affected *strotas* (systems or organs). This is helpful in deciding on a specific treatment<sup>20</sup>.

Modern medicine gives more importance to the specific treatment whereas ancient system of Indian Medicine gives more importance towards holistic treatment. *Ayurveda* has a holistic and person centric approach towards health & disease which in turn necessitates consideration of several factors in the process of a diagnostic work up<sup>21</sup>.

### CONCLUSION

The concept of *Pancha Nidana*, which originated in *Ayurvedic* medicine, holds significant importance in the modern era as a diagnostic tool in *Ayurveda*. The concept of *Pancha Nidana* offers a valuable approach to healthcare that is relevant in the modern era. Developing and validating diagnostic tools for disease enumerated in *Ayurvedic* classical texts can help in standardizing the clinical approach even when attempting to arrive at a patient specific diagnosis.

### COMPETING INTEREST

Authors have declared that no competing interest exist.

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