

Editorial

Health promotion through Ayurveda

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The world is undergoing a rapid change in all spheres; the eco system, nature and living beings are under strong survival stress due to severe pollution, climate change, population rise and other socio-economic reasons. At this complex juncture, human beings are struggling to overcome these odds for survival. Maintaining the integrity of nature and human health is a big challenge in front of the world and it cannot be ignored either; the governing agencies all over the world are spending billions of dollars and coming out with stronger policies to improve public health day by day. To achieve the goal of public health, just by taking the measures such as, bringing doctor-patient gap closer, invention of new molecules for the challenging diseases and sophisticated medical aids are not sufficient, perhaps it needs a more inclusive approach of many aspects which could influence and improve human health in far better way. In this scenario, there is a window of opportunity emerging from the corners of world towards Traditional/Holistic medical systems like Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). TCM is far ahead in reaching to the global community than Ayurveda and better placed in the global market. Though Ayurveda has great potential in its approach and practice, is not able to carve a space for it in the global platform. If the scientific approach of Ayurvedic practice is proved with the supportive documentation and evidence based data, it is possible to take Ayurveda to the global market as a potential public health care delivery system. Since the complimentary medical system is enormously focusing on molecule based medicines alone, gross aspects such as preventive, promotive and social health have been ignored. Public health today is gaining momentum all over, and is a good sign for traditional medical systems to get their place to fulfill the need of the day.

There is remarkable difference exists between medicine and public health, medicine primarily focuses on individual, personal service, ethic in the context of social responsibilities, emphasis on disease diagnosis, treatment and care for the individual patient. Medical paradigm places predominant emphasis on medical care, etiology and pathophysiology (infectious disease, oncology, etc.). Whereas public health features, primarily focus on population, emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion for the whole community. Public health paradigm employs a spectrum of interventions aimed at the environment, human behavior and lifestyle, and medical care. Variable certification of specialists beyond professional public health degree, social and public policy disciplines are integral part of public health education.

Since, health is subjected to constant change under various influences it is equally important to maintain and promote health, as rightly told in Ayurveda “*Arogyam Mulamuttamam*,” Ayurveda given utmost importance to *Arogya* (Health). The primary aim of Ayurveda is “*Swasthasya Swasthyarakshanam*”

and “*Aturasya Vikaraprashamanam*,” the context explains the importance of maintenance and promotion of health in healthy, along with treating a sickness.^[1]

Ayurveda has given much emphasis to personal health and community health. In Ashtanga Hridaya, it is well described that, *Dushya* (*Dhatu* - tissue and *Mala* - excreta), *Desha* (*Deha* - human and *Bhumi* - the locality), *Bala* (*Samarthy* - stamina), *Kala* (diurnal and seasonal time), *Anala* (different state of *Agni*), *Prakriti* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*), *Vaya* (child, adult and old age), *Sattva* (mind), *Satmya* (food and geographical compatibility), *Ahara* (sweet, sour, etc.), *Avastha* (different phenomenal state), *Sukshmasukshma* (minute observation), *Esham* (diseases), and *Dosha Aushadha Nirupanam* (deciding the *Doshik* involvement and drugs) are the fundamental principles to be observed and considered for each patient’s assessment and treatment.^[2]

“Every individual is different from another and hence should be considered as a different entity, as many variations in the universe, so many in the human beings.”^[3]

To achieve the goal of public health for diverse ethnicities, their socio-geographical specificity should be kept at the core along with individual specificities while framing the treatment guidelines and patient assessment for better outcome.

With the increasing trend of poor health index of all age group across the world due to uncontrolled pollution and degradation of healthy eco system, the quality of life is falling to the new low, incidents of deaths are reported all over the world due to non communicable diseases and other diseases are at alarming rate. Life expectancy is falling in all ethnicities and countries, and this scenario is likely to get worsen; at this juncture there is a bad need to look into the opportunities which are available in ancient medical systems, as described earlier, Ayurveda with a outstanding potential to reverse the worsening health status across the world would be the best option. Hallmark of Ayurvedic medicine is that its practices take into account an individual’s total internal, social, and external environment when considering disease prevention, promotion and treatment. With this, it can be said, Ayurveda is the best option for achieving the goal of personal health along with public health.

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Mahesh Vyas

Executive Editor - AYU,
IPGT and RA, Gujarat Ayurved University,
Jamnagar, Gujarat, India.
E-mail: drmaheshvyas@yahoo.com

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