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### Inside Review Of *Gramya Ahara*(Unwholesome Dietary factors) In *Ayurveda* Dr Preeti Sharma<sup>1</sup> , Dr Namit Vashistha<sup>2</sup>

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#### ABSTRACT

With the advancement in medical facilities and health awareness, though the communicable diseases have come under control, there is an upsurge in the non- communicable diseases. Even though lots of research works are carried out on dietary habits, lifestyle and psychological factors in manifestation of Metabolic Syndrome but there is no holistic approach in studying them under one heading. *Ayurveda* emphasizing on holistic approach in the diagnosis and treatment principles has given faulty dietary and lifestyle habits under one heading called *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits) As for the prevention of the metabolic syndrome so there is need to understand the concept of *Gramya Ahara*(Unwholesome dietary habits).

**Keywords :** *Gramya Ahara*, metabolic syndrome, dietary habits ,lifestyle disorder



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## INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of descent of *Ayurveda* was to relieve the sufferings of the individuals afflicted with diseases caused due to shift in the lifestyle, dietary habits and psychological factors.<sup>1</sup> The changes seen with respect to unwholesome dietary habits, lifestyle and stress are collectively termed as “*Gramya Ahara*” (unwholesome dietary habits). A list of faulty dietary habits, lifestyle, psychological factors with their effect on various *Dhatu* (fundamental support of body) and specific features of these deranged *Dhatu* in the form of symptoms have also been enlisted.<sup>2, 3</sup> These symptoms corroborate with group of diseases

which are collectively called as metabolic syndrome.<sup>4</sup> approximately 20 – 25 per cent of the world’s adult population has the cluster of risk factors which is termed as metabolic syndrome.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies have established that there is a link between these diseases and altered lifestyle, dietary habits and psychological factors and they play a major role in their manifestation.<sup>6</sup> Hence there is a need for the understanding of the *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits) in relevance to present day lifestyle and dietary changes.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Diet and Lifestyle in *Ayurveda*

Three foundation pillars for healthy are mentioned in *Ayurveda* and *Ahara* (Diet) is one among them.<sup>7</sup> The strength (*Bala*), complexion (*Varna*), clarity (*Vaishadhya*), good voice (*Swara*), longevity (*Ayu*), happiness (*Sukha*), satisfaction (*Trupti*), intellect (*Medha*), nourishment of sense organs (*Indriya Prasadana*), immunity (*Ojas*), and health (*Arogya*) all are conditioned / obtained by food and also best for sustenance of life.<sup>8</sup> *Charaka Samhita* emphasizes on importance of food as - body as well as diseases is originated from food, wholesome and unwholesome foods are

responsible for happiness and misery respectively.<sup>9</sup> Disease can be cured without any medicine by just following wholesome regimen, whereas even hundreds of medicines cannot cure a disease in absence of wholesome regimen.<sup>10,11,12</sup> Some of the concepts that play a role of ensuring health are quantity of food (*Matravat Ahara*), nature of food or quality of food (*Hita Ahita Ahara*), 8 factors determining utility of food (*Ashta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatana*), and 12 discipline of eating (*Ahara Vidhividhana*).<sup>13</sup>

### Word Meaning of *Gramya Ahara*(unwholesome dietary habit)

Word *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits) is made of two words *Gramya* (*unwholesome*) and *Ahara*.. *Gramya* means that which is in a *Gram* or an area which is small enough to catch or that which is perceivable. *Gramya* also means life is not self-restrained or without discipline or with sensual

pleasures, relating to villages, living in village i.e. among men, domesticated, tame (an animal), cultivated (a plant; opposed to *Vanya* or *Aranya*, wild), allowed in a village, relating to the sensual pleasures of a village, food prepared in a village, used or produced in a village.<sup>14,15</sup> The term *Gramya* (unwholesome) is used as bad or uncultured word in

literature.<sup>16</sup> So *Grama* (village) means a group of people who live in a small area of land. That which is available and consumed by the people in small area of land is *Gramya*.<sup>17</sup> *Hemachandra* explains synonyms of *Gramya* (unwholesome) as *Gramotpanna*.<sup>17</sup> *Ahara* (food) means feeding, support, taking food<sup>18</sup>. The term *Ahara* (food) refers to that which is taken inside through throat. That which is ingested by the tongue down to the throat is called *Ahara* (food).<sup>19</sup> It is important to withdraw the *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits) by which vitality can be improved and in turn resulting in prevention of disease and promotion of health.<sup>20</sup>

#### Enumeration of *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits)

*Gramya Ahara* includes *Amla* (Sour), *Lavana* (Salt), *Katu* (Pungent), *Kshara* (Alkaline), *Shushka Shaka* (Dry leafy vegetable), *Shushka Mamsa* (Dry meat), *Tila* (Sesamum), *Pishta Anna* (flour preparations), *Viroodha Shuka Dhanya & Shami Dhanya* (Sprouted grains), *Nava Shuka Dhanya & Shami Dhanya* (Use of grains which have not crossed one year / newly yield grains), *Viruddha Ahara* ( Incompatible food), *Asatmya Ahara* (food which is not accustomed), *Abhishyandi* (food having the property of obstructing the channels), *Klinna* (Soaked more in water), *Guru* (Heavy to digest), *Puti* (Putrefied), *Paryushita* (Stale or crossed 12 hours after preparation), *Vishama – Ashana* (Irregularity in terms of time and quantity of

consumption), *Adhy-Ashana* (Eating before digestion of the previous food), *Divya- Swapna* (Day sleeping), *Madya Nitya* ( Excessive indulging in alcohol), *Vishama Vyayama* (Indulging in improper and excessive exercise), *Bhaya* ( Fear), *Krodha* (Anger), *Shoka*  
6. *Asandhana* (uncompoundness) of *Majja* (Bone marrow) in *Asthi* (Bone)

(Unhappy), *Lobha* (Greed), *Moha* (Excessive attachment), *Ayasa* (Tiredness).<sup>21,22</sup>

When we go through cross references and analyse these factors we get evidence for the effect of these on *Dhatu* (Fundamental support of body)

#### Effect of *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits) on *Dhatu*

Practice of *Gramya Ahara* (unwholesome dietary habits) leads to the following effects on *Dhatu* (Fundamental support of body) like

1. *Vidahata* (increased hotness / acidity) of *Rakta* (Blood)- Due to nutritional deficiency *Shudha Rakta Utpatti* does not takes place. One can easily compare the *Hetus* (Causes) of *Pandu Roga* and *Gramya Aahar* (unwholesome dietary habits). Formed *Rakta Dhatu* (blood) is unable to carryout proper *Jeevan Karma* (life), *Poshan Karma* (Nutrition) and unable to increase *Bala* (Strength)
2. *Shithilata* (flaccidity) of *Mamsa* (Muscles):- Lack of exercise causes muscle atrophy shrinking and weakening of the muscles causes increasing susceptibility to physical injury.
3. *Vishyandana* (dissolving/overflowing) of *Meda* (Fat)-Due to *Klinna* (Moistened) *Guru* (heavy), *Pishtamay Aahar*
4. with *Meda Dhatu* (fat), *Drava Guna Vridhi* (increase in fluid) takes place. The *Hetus* (Causes) are similar to *Sthaulya* (Obesity) and *Prameha* (Diabetes)
5. *Vimunchana* (dislocation) of *Sandhi* ( Joints)- Joints are vitiated so does the physio reducing the body activity.

*Majja Dhatu* is unable to reside in *Ashti Dhatu*. Due to nutritional deficiency bone marrow does not get properly stimulated and is unable to form

normal erythrocytes, leucocytes and platelets leading to pancytopenia.

#### 7. *Apravartana* (no flow) of *Shukra* (Semen) –

Person feels impairment in ejaculation of semen. *Kshaya* (reduction) of

#### *Ojas* (Immunity)

Essential nutrients are not made available in required quantity does leading to symptoms of *Oja Kshaya* (Depressed immune system). Physical fitness is correlated with immune system function; a reduction in physical fitness is generally accompanied by a weakening of the immune system. These are initial changes which lead to various Symptoms like<sup>23,24</sup> Tiredness (*Glani*), Weakness (*Sada*) Excessive sleepiness (*Nidra*), Drowsiness (*Tandra*), Laziness (*Alasya*), Lack of enthusiastic (*Nirutsaha*) starts breathing more by doing little work (*Shvasa*), Unfit to work physically and mentally (*Mana Shaarira Chesta Asamarthya*), Loss of memory (*Nashta Smruti*), Loss of intellect (*Nashta Buddi*), Loss of complexion (*Nashta Chaya*), Body becomes the abode of disease and there will be decrease of life span. By the use of rough food in excessive quantity (*Ruksha*), incompatible (*Virudda*), improperly cooked (*Apakva*), unsuitable food (*Asatmya*) and eating during indigestion (*Adhyashana*) resulting in vitiation of the *doshas* (base of body) , these vitiated *doshas* vitiate *Dhatus* and produce disorders of heart.<sup>25</sup>

### Relation between effect of Gramya Ahara and Symptoms of Metabolic Syndrome

When we look into contemporary science we find metabolic Risk factors which are indicators of forthcoming mets which have group of symptoms like dull headaches, vomiting , stomach pain increased thirst, increased urination , especially at night, Fatigue, tiredness, frequent infections, slow healing wound lack of interest and concentration , weight loss -even through one is eating more, tingling pain, or numbness in the hands/feet confusion and dyspnea, Dizziness, impairment of balance calf pain while walking more nose bleeds than usual, visceral and / or ectopic fat, raising glucose and insulin level, osteoporosis, abdominal obesity, blurred vision, depression, mood variation, reduce ability to perform physical activities , bodily pain, anxiety, psychological distress which are similar to the effects produced by the consumption of *Gramya Ahara*. The person become abode of all types of disease and does not enjoy full life span<sup>26,27</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

Following *Gramya Ahara* leads to the reduction of vitality. Hence it is important to withdraw the *Gramya Ahara* by which vitality can be improved and in turn resulting in prevention of disease and promotion of health. *Gramya Ahara* is the unique concept found in *Samhita*. Today's dietary and life style habits are playing a major role in causing a

diseases by altering the metabolism which are termed as metabolic disorders which is explained in the context of *Gramya Ahara*. Intake of *Gramya Ahara* leads to improper formation of *Dhatus*, resulting with a negative impact on quality of life, which in turn leads to certain primary indicators of reduced quality of health.

## CONCLUSION

*Ayurveda* is a health science whose aim is to lead a healthy long life. Long life is possible only if one maintains healthy life style and by avoiding *Apathya Ahara* (not suitable) *Gramya Ahara*

(unwholesome dietary habits) is also one such *Apathya Ahara* (not suitable) which needs to be avoided.

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