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## An *Ayurvedic* Approach To Public Health

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### Abstract:

It is believed to *Ayurveda* has existed since the creation of the universe. It is more clearly the science of life because it describes not only the treatment of disease but also the methods of prevention from disease. In today's era, it has become very difficult to build a healthy society, first of all, to save a person from diseases. Then if there is any disease, treat it and also live a long life. Public health can be obtained from *Ayurveda* due to both *Ayurveda* and public health being the same aims. The present article tries to analyze the concept of public health and health brief in the context of *Ayurveda*. Public health as health is primarily seen as a uniform or a stream for community medicine. The classical texts of *Ayurveda* describe many theories such as infectious diseases, immunity, nutrition, etc. But the current documents will focus briefly on the concept of public health and health. In the present article, we will try to know whether we can fulfill the purpose of Public Health through *Ayurveda*.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda*, Public Health, longevity of life.

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## INTRODUCTION:

Only a healthy person can build a healthy society and a healthy society can build a healthy country that is why the constitution has also given health a fundamental right. *Ayurveda* is an ancient holistic system of medicine, which mainly considers these two points on how to keep a healthy person healthy and how to eradicate the illness of the patient and the same objective of public health are also to prevent from diseases, cure diseases, and to provide long life by improving the quality of life of the person<sup>1</sup>. In *Ayurveda*, the body is made up of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*. If *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* have imbalanced then the person gets sick. Many principles have been described in *Ayurveda* such as *Tridosha*, *Sapta Dhatu*, *Mal*, *Panchamahabhata*, *Prakriti*, *Saar*, *Srotas*, *Rasayana*<sup>2</sup> and *Yoga*. By following these principles in daily life, a person can

achieve a healthy life. With modern science, we can only get some degree of freedom from diseases, but with *Ayurveda*, we can also avoid disease, if we get any disease then we can get rid of it, *Ayurveda* can play an important role in Public Health, like health, it is necessary to bring public health as an equal or a stream of mainly community medicine. General principles will be very important. The classical texts of *Ayurveda* describe many principles related to public health such as infectious diseases, immunity, nutrition, etc. But the article is limited to the concept of public health and health in brief.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD-

Various *Ayurvedic* texts, relevant modern medical science books, various research/

review articles, and websites are have been used for this study as source materials.

### **AYURVEDA AND HEALTH-**

According to WHO “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity<sup>3</sup>.” This definition has three dimensions of health, physical, mental, and social. It rules out the mere absence of disease and stands with a broad definition of health encompassing all three dimensions of health. According to *Ayurveda* a state of balanced *Dosha*, Balanced *Dhatu* (tissue system), Balanced *Agni* (enzymes and metabolites), Balanced *Malakriya* (state of excretory functions), *Prasanna*(escaty), *Aatma* (Soul), *Indriya*, (senses), and *mana* (Mind) is called *Swastha*<sup>4</sup>. When we compare both these definitions, we find that both the definitions have the same sense of meaning, whereas it seems that the WHO has defined health by looking at the definition of *Swastha* in *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* describes three different types of such *Doshas* named *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, and each of these *Doshas* are again classified into five different types. Some people compare *Vata* with the nervous system owing to some of its characteristics, *Pitta* with the GI system and

especially with gastric enzymes and the metabolites and *Kapha* with some of the fluids of our body such phlegm and synovial fluid. *Ayurveda* describes seven different types of *Dhatu*, these are *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra*. Every *Dhatu* is originating from previous *Dhatu* like *Rakta* is made up of *Rasa*, *Mamsa* is made up of *Rakta*, *Meda* is made up of *Mamsa* etc. Thus, *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* rule the body kingdom, i.e. the kingdom of *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mansa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra* and hence the body continues to function. Our daily life activities are a result of this functioning. Waste products, which are by-products of our daily activities, are called *Malas*. There are mainly three *Mala* like; *Aharaj Mala* (faeces), *Mutra* (urine) and *Sweda* (sweat). *Ayurveda* based on the *Dosh-Dhatu-Mala* concept. *Doshas* are body constituents that are responsible for the way the body functions. This body is made up of seven *Dhatus*. *Malas* are waste products of the body. If all of these works well, we can maintain good health. If anything goes wrong in this chain of activity then we are affected by the disease.

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND AYURVEDA-**

According to Public Health as, “the science and art of preventing diseases, prolonging life, and promoting health and efficiency through organized community effort”<sup>5</sup>. The definition emphasizes three important features, those are prevention of disease, prolongation of life, and promotion of health. These three important features have also been emphasized by proponents of *Ayurveda*. The objective of *Ayurveda* which indirectly defines public health and its objective<sup>6</sup>. *Ayurveda* focuses on two aims; one is the protection of the health of a healthy individual and the second is the abolition of disease of a patient<sup>7</sup>. So *Ayurveda* emphasizes the protection of the health of a healthy individual, which means, if a person is healthy his/her health is ensured. For this purpose *Ayurvedic* proponents advocates various lifestyle administrations that are described in *Ayurvedic* classical texts. Some of these modalities are the concept of *Dinacharya* (Daily health promotional activities) and *Ritucharya* (Health promotional activities during the specific season), *Aahara* (Specific dietary regimen), *Pathya* (wholesome diet), *Apathya* (Unwholesome diet), etc. Many of these modalities

mentioned above are the health promotion strategies of the present day. The second part of the aim of *Ayurveda* describes curative health, which means alleviation of disease. But if we look at various therapeutic regimens described in the classical texts of *Ayurveda*, all of those justify three levels of prevention such as primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Let us understand this very well; primary prevention emphasizes health promotion and specific protection which can be achieved by above said modalities; secondary prevention emphasizes on early diagnosis and treatment can be achieved by various methods of diagnosis. Such as *Darshana* (inspection), *Sparshana* (palpation), and *Prashna* (interrogation), *Dashvidh Pareeksha*, etc. and treatment tools such *Shaman* (alleviation) & *Sodhana* (purification); tertiary prevention emphasizes on disease modification and disability limitation which can also be achieved by the help of various treatment modalities such as *Shaman Chikitsa*, *Shodhan Chikitsa*, *Panchakarma cikitsa*, etc. Briefly the principles and practices of *Ayurveda* justify the principles and practice of public health in its way.

**DISCUSSION-**

The present article is limited to two important concepts; Achieving the concept of public health through *Ayurveda*. This is because when we try to understand the concept of public health in *Ayurveda*, we should also understand health. This article does not go into detail as to what all the principles have been described in *Ayurveda* under the larger umbrella of public health. This study intentionally limits its scope to a concise concept of public health and health briefly. On the other hand, it tries to make as much information as is needed to understand both these concepts. We can understand from the above study that the aim of Public Health and *Ayurveda* is mainly the same. In today's era, the disease is mainly related to lifestyle disorders and we can avoid these diseases by following the principles of *Ayurveda* and if we suffer from a disease then we can get rid of these diseases through *Ayurveda* treatment. The sources of income of today's person have also been reduced, and there is a big expenditure on health services but using *Ayurveda* we can save it.

**CONCLUSION-**

*Ayurveda* learns the art of living a healthy life by eradicating diseases along with a healthy life whereby a person attains health and longevity. Thus, in *Ayurveda*, the concept of public health, even encompassing all ages, focuses primarily on the individual ability of healthy aging as fulfilling one's life. *Ayurveda* is based on universal principles - not limited to a particular ethnic group or culture - to be person-centered and conflicting, both as an integration of existing healthcare systems as well as to preserve local traditional values can be used as a template to meet the needs of different populations<sup>8</sup> This article is a literally approach to the concept of health and public health that does not explicitly gain access to details of the principles and practices of public health. The classical texts of *Ayurveda* describe various theories related to current public health practice. *Ayurveda* is widely used as a system of primary health care in India, and there is growing interest worldwide<sup>9</sup>. The global trend of public health problems has led to a shift from its previous focus on infectious diseases to chronic lifestyle disorders and *Ayurveda* is undoubtedly a boon to address these problems with its old

principles. With the recent development of the National Rural Health Mission and RBSK, some principles and measures are being used very effectively for the prevention of public health problems. The best example of public health through *Ayurveda* is; to use of *Chyawanprash*, *Turmeric* milk, *Giloy* and follow other *Ayurvedic* rules to protect against the COVID-19 epidemic spread across the world at present. Modern medicine has been exceptionally developed with the amalgamation of technology in the fields of diagnosis, prophylactic and curative procedures<sup>10</sup>. But the simple regiments described in ancient classical texts are in

extreme use in dealing with the public health problems facing the present-day world. The study is a brief review of the concept of public health and health in *Ayurveda*, but the above statements can also be studied to find relevance and suitability in *Ayurveda*, which use *Ayurveda* as a way to redress emerging and re-emerging public health problems of the present day.

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