

Importance of Ayu Pareeksha for the Management of Diseases

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ABSTRACT

The word *Ayurveda* comes from the *Sanskrit* root *Ayu* which means span of life. The purpose of examination of *Ayu* is to obtain knowledge regarding longevity, residual span of life in diseased person and rate of the mortality. The purpose of *Dashavidha Pariksha* is to obtain knowledge regarding *Dosha Bala (Vyadhi Bala)*, *Bala (Rogibala)* and *Ayu* of the patient as described in *Charak Samhita*. Commonly *Ayu* and *Vaya* are regarded as synonyms but they are not similar terms. Hence, description of *Vaya* and *Ayu* is separately mentioned in *Charaka* as well as *Sushruta Samhita*. Description exclusively on *Ayu Pareeksha* described in *Charaka Viman Sthana*, *Charaka Chikitsasthana*, *Charaka Indriya Sthana* and *Charaka Shareer Sthana*. In *Indriya Sthana*, *Ayu Pariksha* indicates the residual life-span of the diseased person and where as in *Jaatisutriya Adhyaya* in *Shareer Sthana* mentioned the characteristic properties of the child who is going to survive for longer period of time. In *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ayu* is classified into three broad headings namely *Dhirghayu*, *Madhyamayu* and *Alpayu* and explained the characteristic properties of all the three.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the medical science that deals with the life span of human beings along with the measures to cure and prevent the diseases. The word *Ayu* is derived from "Ayussu". meaning life span, and *Veda* means knowledge. According to *Ayurveda*, "Dhirghayu" or longevity means a complete balance between body, mind and soul associated with longevity, Without this balance a person cannot enjoy the real benefit of longevity i.e., a state of permanent happiness and peace. According to *Ayurveda*, there are four basic goals of human life namely, *Dharma* (religion), *Artha* (economy), *Kama* (sense pleasure) and *Moksha* (liberation). To practice and fulfill these basic goals of life one needs good health [1]. The body is the vehicle on which one rides to their destination. If the body is weak or sick, one cannot function properly and is unable to achieve the goals of life. Therefore, for longevity, good health is important and for maintaining health, physician needs to examine *Ayu* from birth till death. *Ayurvedic* text describes how to attain longevity and also mentioned verities of longevity through *Ayu Pareeksha*. *Ayurveda* explains certain signs and symptoms to decide the life span (*Manam of Ayu*) of a patient. *Ayu Pariksha* has been broadly classified into three broad headings, namely, *Dhirghayu*, *Madhyamayu* and *Alpayu* and these are described by *Sushruta* [2]. He says that before prescribing any therapeutic procedure, physician should examine life span of the patients and if they have residual life span then his *Vyadhi* (disease), *Ritu* (season), *Agni* (digestive power), *Vaya* (age), *Deha* (body build), *Bala* (strength), *Sattva* (mind), *Satmya* (conducive factors), *Prakriti* (constitution), *Bhesaja* (drug) and *Desa* (habitat) should be examined [3]. Tenfold examination are the tools described in *Charaka* to obtain knowledge regarding the span of life, strength and intensity of morbidity and these are *Prakriti* (constitution), *Vikriti* (morbidity), *Sara* (excellence of *Dhatu*s), *Samhanana* (compactness of organs), *Pramana* (measurements of the organs of the body), *Satmya* (suitability), *Sattva* (psychic conditions), *Aahara Sakti* (power of intake and digestion of food), *Vyayama Sakti* (power of performing exercise) and *Vayas* (ageing) [4]. The basic purpose of these examinations is to understand the overall condition of the person in order to prescribe meticulous and systematically planned therapeutic treatment to get desirable and satisfying successful results. With a view to ascertaining the life span of an individual, symptoms

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described in *Charak Samhita Indriyasthana*, and, also in the eighth chapter of *Shareer Sthana* must be taken in to account.

The Difference Between Ayu and Vaya

वयस्तश्चेति कालप्रमाणविशेषापेक्षिणी हि शरीरावस्था वयोऽभिधीयते ।
C.V-8/12.

Vaya is defined as the state of body corresponding to the length of time that has passed since birth. *Vaya* (Age) is one of the medium to achieve the knowledge regarding *Ayu* (span of life) besides other tools [5]. Both *Charaka* and *Sushruta* say that before prescribing any therapeutic procedures, physician should examine to obtain knowledge regarding the span of life, strength and intensity of morbidity.

Ayu Pareeksha (Examination of Life Span)

There are three varieties of *Ayu Pareeksha* namely *Dhirghayu*, *Madhyamayu* and *Alpayu* along with their characteristics are mentioned [6].

Dhirghayu (Long life span): The following criteria are useful to assess the long life span of the individual and these patients should be treated with all efforts.

One who possesses big hands, feet, flanks, back, tip of the breasts, teeth, face, shoulders, forehead, long finger joints, expirations, eyes, arms, broad brows, space in between the breasts and broad chest; short calves, penis and neck; whose mind, voice and umbilicus are deep and breasts are not greatly elevated but are firm; whose ears and back of the head are well grown, big, hairy and body drying first from the head after bath and anointing and the region of the heart later on [6].

Madhyamayu (Moderate life span): One who possesses mixed features of *Dhirghayu* (having long span of life) is considered as *Madhyamayu* along with well manifest, broad, two, three or more lines below the *Aksa* (clavicles) and whose feet and ears are more muscular, tip of the nose is elevated and appearance of vertical lines on the back. These persons will survive for 70 years [6].

Alpayu (Short life span): One who possesses opposite of the *Dhirghayu* (having long span of life) qualities should be understood as *Alpayu* (short span of life) along with short joints, big penis, chest

having hair appearing in circles (whirls), back is not broad, ears and nose located slightly up than their normal position, gums are visible during laughing or talking and whose sight is unsteady will survive only for 25 years [6].

Characteristic Features Indicative of Life Span of Life In Children

In *Charaka Shareer Sthana Jaata Sutriya Adhyaya* [7] after performing the rites for giving a name to the child, one should examine the child to ascertain the span of life. The following signs and symptoms indicate the longevity of the children [Table/Fig-1].

Factors to be Examined to Determine Residual Span of Life

Charaka in *Indriyasthana* described in detail about *Arista* which indicates span of life. "*Niyat Maran Khyapakam Lingam Aristam*" - signs and symptoms which indicates the definite death of the patient is called *Arista* [8]. It indicates the residual life span of the diseased person. The following factors must be taken into consideration by the physician desirous of ascertaining remaining span of life by *Pratyaksa* (examination by sense organs), *Anumana* (inference/medical history) and *Upadesha* (scriptural testimony) are as follows i.e., *Varna, Svara, Gandha, Rasa, Sparsa, Cakshu, Srotra, Ghranam,*

Rasana, Sparsana, Sattva, Bhakti, Shaucam, Shilam, Achara, Smiriti, Aakriti, Prakriti, Vikriti, Bala, Glani, Medha, Harsa, Rauksya, Sneha, Tandra, Arambha, Gaurava, Laghava, Guna, Aahara Vihar, Aahara Prainama, Upaya, Apaya, Vyadhi, Vyadhi Purvarupa, Vedana, Upadrava, Chaya, Praticchaya, Svapnadarsana, Dutadhikara, Pathi Cautpatikam, Bhesaja Samvritti and Bhesaja Vikara Yukti [9].

Nimittanurupa is one of the sub types of *Vikriti*. This will serve as a yard stick to measure the span of life [10]. Particular symptoms and signs of imminent death indicate the diminution of the span of life. It is the duty of the physician to have a thorough knowledge of this to ascertain the span of life of an individual otherwise it becomes very difficult phenomenon and physician will get bad name and reputation in the society.

VAYA PRAEKSHA- (EXAMINATION OF AGE)

According to *Sushruta Vaya* is classified into three stages [11].

- I. *Balya* (Childhood or early young age) up to 16 Years. It can be subdivided into three i.e., *Ksirapa*- only milk consumption – up to one year, *Ksirannada* – milk and solid food – up to two years, *Annada*- Only solid food – more than two years up to 16 years.
- II. *Madhya* (Middle age or Young age) More than 16 years up to 70 years of age sub divided into : *Vridhhi*- up to 20 years (Growth phase), *Yauvana*- up to 30 years (Youth and adolescence),

S.No.	Organs of the child	Characteristic feature indicative of long span of life
1.	Hair	Discrete, soft, parse, unctuous, firmly rooted and black.
2.	Skin	Thick and not loose.
3.	Head	Constitutionally of excellent type, slightly bigger in size (than the measurement <i>Vimana</i> 8:117), proportionate with other parts of the body and resembling an umbrella in shape.
4.	Fore head	Broad, strong even, compact having firm union with temporal bones having wrinkles and having the shape a half moon.
5.	Ears	Thick, large in size, having even lobes, equal in size, having elongations down wards, bent towards back side, having compact tragus and having a big earhole.
6.	Eye brows	Slightly hanging downwards, separated from each other, equal in size, compact and large in size.
7.	Eyes	Equal in size, having fixed look, having clear cut divisions (of pupil, iris or black portion of the eye, sclera or white portion of the eye), strong, lustrous, beautiful and having beautiful apanga (corners of eyes).
8.	Nose	Straight, capable of taking deep breath well ridged and slightly curved at the tip.
9.	Mouth	Big in size, straight and having (two rows of) compact teeth.
10.	Tongue	Having proper length and breadth, smooth, thin and endowed with natural colour.
11.	Palate	Smooth, plump, hot in touch and red in colour.
12.	Voice	Profound, not sluggish, sweet, having echoed deep toned and steady.
13.	Lips	Neither very thick nor very thin, having adequate width, capable of covering the mouth cavity and red in colour.
14.	Jaws	Large in size.
15.	Neck	Round in shape and not very large in size.
16.	Chest	Broad and plumpy.
17.	Clavicles and Vertiberal column	Not visible.
18.	Breasts	Having wide space in between them.
19.	Parsva (side of the chest)	Absence of any uneven appearance, chest downwards and firm.
20.	Arms, thighs, fingers including toes	Round, full and extended.
21.	Hands and Legs	Large in size and plump.
22.	Nails	Firm, round, unctuous, coppery colour red, properly elevated and convex like the back of a tortoise.
23.	Umblicus	Whirled clock-wise and well depressed.
24.	Waist	Less than 3/4 th of the chest in circumference, even and plump with muscles.
25.	Buttocks	Round, firm, plump with muscles and neither excessively elevated nor excessively depressed.
26.	Thighs	Tapering downwards, round and plump.
27.	Calf region	Neither excessive plump nor excessively emaciated, having resemblance with that of a deer and having vessels bones and joints well covered.
28.	Ankles	Neither excessively plump nor excessively emaciated.
29.	Feet	Having the characteristic features described above and having the shape like that of a tortoise.

[Table/Fig-1]: Signs and symptoms indicating longevity in children.
Factors to be examined to determine residual span of life

Sampurnata- up to 40 years (Mature Stage), *Parihani*- More than 40 up to 70 years (degenerative phase) with full growth of tissues, sense, faculties, strength and vitality.

- III. *Vridhdha* (old age)-After 70 years, and, it is witnessed by degeneration of tissues started along with diminution in the tissues, sense faculties, strength, vitality, grey hairs, baldness, suffers from cough, dyspnoea, etc., and inability to perform all activities.

Shlesma enhances greatly in young age, *Pitta* increases greatly in middle age and *Vata* increases greatly in old age. This should be kept in mind before planning any therapy. Use of *Ksara* (alkali preparations) and purgation therapy should be avoided in children and old age in diseases curable by above therapeutics. If it is necessary then it should be done moderately and slowly [12].

According to *Charaka*, *Vaya* (age) is defined as the state of body corresponding to the length of time that has passed since birth. Age is broadly divided into three stages *Bala* (childhood), *Madhya* (middle age) and *Jirna* (old age). Childhood is determined up to 16 years [13]. When the *Dhatu*s are immature, sexual characters are not manifested, the body is delicate, unenduring, with incomplete strength and predominant in *Kapha*. In this stage, *Dhatu*s are in developing stage and unstable mind remains up to 30 years. Mild medicaments may be employed. Middle age is characterized by strength, energy, virility, powers, acquisition of all *Dhatu*s having reached the normal limit associated with proper physical and mental strength, without degeneration in qualities of *Dhatu*s with predominance of *Pitta* and is up to 60 years. Stronger medicaments may be employed to gain the success at this stage. Old age is up to 100 years. There is diminution of *Dhatu*s (tissue elements), strength of sense organs, energy, manliness, valour, power of understanding, retention, memorizing, speech and analyzing fact. There is gradual diminution in the qualities of *Dhatu*s and dominance of *Vata*. This period should be handled carefully with mild and moderate medicaments because of delicate nature of the old age. There are persons who live longer or shorter than that, in such cases, one should determine the three divisions of age on the basis of strength of the factors like *Prakrti Sara* etc., except *Vikriti* and also characters of different periods of life span [14,15].

Essential Factors for the Proper Growth of Body and Promotion of Strength and Longer Life

Kalayoga (time factor) is the ideal time for the proper growth of child in the uterus. Hence, lady should conceive in an appropriate time and age. Young age is the period in which complete development of body *Dhatu*s observed. Ideal time factor provides beneficial environment for the development of *Dhatu*s and assists for the nourishment. For example: if person born during *Hemanta* and *Shishira Ritu*, it favours the promotion of strength. *Svabhavasamsiddhi* (natural favourable process)-natural favourable factors assist for the proper growth of foetus and child, and these are present since birth. Certain unseen factors that favour the growth of the body naturally are called *Svabhava Samsiddhi*. *Ahara Saustava* (Excellence of diet): Food substances possessing excellent properties and qualities, which supports and fulfills the growing criteria for *Dhatu*s. *Avighata* (absence of factor which deteriorate *Dhatu*): it means absence of factors which favours deterioration of *Dhatu*s [16]. For example: excessive indulgence in sexual acts and one who is suffering from mental faculties and other dreadful diseases leading to deterioration of body. A person who takes birth in a country where naturally strong individuals reside assists in the development of strength. For example: *Sindhya* region people are strong by nature. Exceptional qualities in the *Bija* (sperm) and *Kshetra* (ovum and uterus) of father and mother favour good quality offsprings. Consumption of balanced diet supports for overall growth of the body. Strong physique of an individual prevents the development of diseases up to certain extent. One who is accustomed to all tastes of food causes overall nutrition of the body. Superior mental faculty individuals possess exceptional

strength. Some individuals possess positive natural mechanism assist to gain energy and strength. Complete development of cells and tissues along with mental stability in young age causing acquisition of strength. Habitual performance of exercise promotes strength. Cheerful frame of mind and stress free environment assist to gain strength. *Prakriti sampat* means person possessing equilibrium state of all *Doshas* and it is called *Sama Prakriti* and these individuals live longer [17]. Excellent essence, compactness etc., favours strength. Natural excellent inherent qualities transformed from parents causes potency. Righteous acts, observation of penance, indulging in right conducts helps for longevity. Celibacy, sleeping in a place, which is devoid of breeze, hot water bath, sleeping during night, physical exercises, is best adjustable to all as a wholesome substance. It is responsible for providing biological strength (*Bala*) to the various parts of the body and protection of the body against diseases (*Vyadhiksamatva*) [18]. A person is going to survive for longer period provided if he has properly developed joints, vessels and ligaments associated with steady sense faculties and appearance of all body organs are excellent from feet to head and are looking better than its preceding generation. Person who is free from disorders even from foetal life and gradually developing day by day with common and scientific knowledge lives longer. Collected rainwater in a clean vessel mitigates all three *Doshas*, promotes strength, rejuvenative and best for intelligence [19]. Only the living being can enjoy desired fruit of his action. Therefore, one desirous of long life should avoid rash behavior. Avoiding the entire things one has to protect his body first by using appropriate preventive measures [20]. *Shukra* is the ultimate excellent outcome of food. That is why one has to preserve it because its diminution leads to development of many diseases or even death. Person who is having control over his senses should take wholesome food in proper quantity and in proper time otherwise irregular dieting manifest diseases [21].

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is the traditional Indian medical system explains the measures to combat and prevent the diseases along with ways to prevent the progress of diseases. *Ayu* means life span and *Veda* means knowledge. In a nut shell *Ayurveda* explains the ways to improve the longevity along with remedies to cure the diseases. Verities of longevity along with their characteristic were mentioned under *Ayu Pareeksha* and it is broadly classified into three broad headings namely *Dhirghayu*, *Madhyamayu* and *Alpayu*, before prescribing any therapeutic procedures, physician should examine life span of the patients to treat various diseases and to explain mortality and morbidity of the diseases; on examination if they have long span of life then his *Vyadhi*, *Ritu*, *Agni*, *Vaya*, *Deha*, *Bala*, *Satva*, *Satmya*, *Prakriti*, *Bhesaja* and *Desa*. With a view to ascertain the life span of an individual, symptoms described in *Indriyasthana* and also in the eighth chapter of *Shareer Sthana* must be taken into account. The aims and objectives of *Ayurveda* is to prolong the longevity of an individual by adopting certain measures and diagnose clinically whether particular individual will survive longer or not and accordingly administer strategies to enhance longevity, otherwise physician will get bad reputation in the society. Hence, knowledge of *Ayu* is important for gaining success, name and fame in the society by the physician.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Whenever we receive articles associated with Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani etc., we always receive negative or conflicting peer review reports or we don't receive any peer review report at all, as there is lack of literature pertaining to the practice of these disciplines.

Plenty of books related to practice of these pathies are available but there is paucity in the updated version of these books. The field of medicine is ever growing and ever changing, always looking for

answers to the unsolved mystery of various diseases, which has made other streams of medicine popular nowadays, best example being the practice of yoga and meditation. By allowing this article to be published in a mainstream journal, our intention is to bring the author's perspective forward to the national and international scientists and to our esteemed readers; so, that may be some day someone will try to approve or disapprove this in a randomized controlled trial.

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