



Opinion Note

Elemental analysis in *Rachana Sharir* – the least explored area of Ayurvedic research

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ABSTRACT

Elemental analysis refers to research that involves the development of knowledge, resulting in new concepts, methodologies, and understandings through creative applications of existing information. This can be achieved with the synthesis and analysis of previous research, which may lead to new and creative outcomes. Nowadays, it is the need of the hour in the field of Ayurveda. Ayurveda research focuses on creating a scientific approach towards the concepts and fundamental principles mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics, along with necessary adjustments to maintain the basic principles of Ayurveda. Doubtful concepts from *Ayurvedic Samhitas* can be addressed through literary research. On an academic platform, the basic principles of Ayurveda, as mentioned in the Ayurvedic texts, should be loud and clear. The concept of *Rachana Sharir* includes ancient Neuroanatomy such as *Nadi Tantra*, *Marma* (vital points of the body), *Sukshma* (micro), and *Sthula* (macro) *Sharir*, applied aspects of *Shad chakras*, *Srotas* (body channels), *Avedhya sira* (non-puncture vein), and *Kala sharir* (membranes). As knowledge of *Rachana Sharir* is the most important aspect before any treatment in Ayurveda, this article aims to explore the areas in *Rachana Sharir* that need clarification through research.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science in which all the knowledge of health and health-related issues has been given in ancient *Samhitas*. Ayurveda is purely an evidence-based science. Nowadays, in the global era, logical or fundamental theories cannot function smoothly. Anyone can question the basic fundamentals to prove them. Hence every fundamental must be proven through research media. Therefore, there is huge scope for research in the field of *Ayurveda*. A number of scientific developments and refinements have been made in the field of old theories, hence it is important to have a scientific view of this ancient medical science. To cover up all lacunas, research should be carried out in the areas of fundamental principles without compromising them. Several organizations are there which are well-established in research infrastructure for exclusive research in *Ayurveda*. Research in *Ayurveda* should be carried out in the literary field, experimental and clinical fields which should impact the field of academics and hence contribute actively. The *Ayurveda* research can be classified into three basic categories, viz. (i) research in literature and theory (ii) experimental research and (iii) clinical research.

Most of the *Ayurvedic* research is carried out on drug research but, for every science, its basic principles should be reinforced properly. Hence in the field of *Rachana Sharir*, the most important areas of research are the concept of ancient *Nadi Tantra*, *marma*, *sukshma*, and

sthula sharir, *shad chakras*, *srotas*, *Avedhya sira*, *Kala sharir*, etc. (Gupta, 2004). Researchers of *Rachana Sharir* should explore the *Samhitas* for proper validation and establishment based on modern parameters.

The use of literary research has been an integral part of all kinds of research. Proper literary research provides appropriate guidelines for formulating hypotheses in the current study. The chronological importance based on literary research triggers present and future research work. Literary research can be helpful in clarifying unsolved or doubtful topics by revealing hidden connections.

Hence, based on the above points, the present study aims to find out the areas where there is a need for research in *Rachana Sharir*. The present study explored the *Ayurvedic Samhitas* through literary research in the areas of *Rachana Sharir*.

CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION OF NADIS

Nadis refer to the channels in which there is a subtle flow of vibrations is there. It is the main medium of the Ayurvedic neuroanatomy which is mentioned in different Ayurvedic & yogic texts. *Nadis* are the channels in which the circulation and transportation of various vibrations occur. These channels carried out the *Pranas* which is necessary for life. There are about 72000 *Nadis* that have been described in different ancient texts. Among these only three *Nadis* are most important. These are named *Ida*, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna Nadis* (Gupta, 2008). *Ida Nadi* is

located and controlled from the left side of the body, *Pingala Nadi* is located and controlled from the right side of the body and the third *Sushumna Nadi* is located in the middle of the body in *Merudand* or spinal cord. They are also named after of holy rivers *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, and *Saraswati* which are connected at the base of *Merudand* or spinal cord. These are mentioned as the structural description of ancient neuroanatomy in ancient texts. This concept of *nadis* is also been explained by the Charaka and Susruta which should be clarified and redefined in Ayurvedic texts. The difference in yogic and Ayurvedic texts and concepts related to *nadis* must be clarified with need. It should be proved through research only.

CONCEPT OF AVEDHYA SIRA

Avedhya literally means not to be pricked. *Acharya Sushruta* has explained in *Sharirsthsana* that there are many vessels present near or at the site of *Marma*, so they are stated as *Avedhya* because if these vessels are pricked, it may cause disability or death due to excessive loss of blood (Acharaya, 2013).

EXPLANATION OF KALA

Kala refers to covering. This can be understood as skin is the outer covering of our body similarly *dhatu*, *ashya*, *pratayangas* which are present inside the body are covered by a layer which is called *kala*. These are the outer layers which cover the various organs and tissues. There are seven types of *kalas* namely *mamsdhara kala*, *raktadhara kala*, *medodhara kala*, *shaleshmadhara kala*, *purishdhara kala*, *pittadhara kala* and lastly *shukradhara kala*. These *kalas* should be researched and documented scientifically in terms of clinical study as well as literary study (Shashtri, 2012).

ROLE OF MARMA

Marmas are the vital points of the body and there is a lot of work that has been done based on the anatomical correlation of *Marma*. According to various Ayurvedic texts, *marmas* are 107 in number (Murthy, 2017). The detailed knowledge of *Marma* is important. The various surgical procedures like *Agnikarma*, *Ksharakarma* and *Shastrakarma* can be used as a part of the surgery, in them, the knowledge of *Marma Sthana* is required while conducting these surgical procedures (Frawley et al., 2010). These procedures can be performed without any complications with proper knowledge of *Marma Sthana*. In conditions like trauma, it is necessary to know the knowledge of trauma site, structures involved and deformity. So treatment and surgical procedures in both aspects *Marma* study are important.

In *Marma Cikitsa*, the *Marmas* are stimulated by applying pressure, vibration of tendons, and deep pinching of the skin and subcutaneous tissues and muscles which generate pain sensation in the patient. The amplitudes of these techniques vary according to age, disease, patient's pain threshold and type of *Marma* point. There is no direct reference to *Marma Cikitsa* in Ayurveda literature. Such type of therapeutic approach of *Marma* opens a new dimension in the field of Ayurvediya *Marma Chikitsa* to prove the statement *Jivantiti Marmaani* (*Marma* gives the

life). Unfortunately, the healing modality of *Marma* is least practiced or practiced by a few individuals and is scientifically unexplored by scholars of *Ayurveda*. Hence, this concept should also be studied and researched in a certain manner.

CONCEPT OF GENETICS IN AYURVEDA

Genetics is a great area of interest for researchers in Ayurveda. Ayurveda has mentioned different factors that result in congenital diseases. Concepts of *Beeja*, *Beejabhaga*, and *Beejbhagavayava* are clearly mentioned in various Ayurveda texts. *Acharya Charaka* has given an explanation about *Garbhakara Bhavas* (Shastri, 2009). They are *Matrija*, *Pitrija*, *Aatmaja*, *Satmyaja*, *Rasaja*, and *Satvaja*. These six factors influence the formation of a fetus. Fundamental concepts of *Dauhrud*, *Atulyagotra*, *Shape of the fetus* like *Pinda*, *Peshi*, and *Arbud*, factors responsible for *Beejdosh* and their results are some areas that need to be explored. These are the concepts of Ayurveda embryology, and they can be studied with various study designs.

CONCEPT OF SHAD CHAKRA

Chakras are believed to be part of the subtle body, thought to vitalize the physical and mental status of an individual. *Muladhara*, *Swadhishtana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Vishuddha* and *Ajna* are called *Shadchakra*. The karma of *Chakra* is to spin and draw in this universal life force energy to keep the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health of the body. *Chakra* modulates the flow of subtle energy. The movement of energy is vital to life and the energetic process in the body is caused by the nervous system. The action of *Chakra* is most relevant to the autonomic and somatic nervous systems, which deal with the body's automatic and voluntary responses to various situations (Hiroshi, 2001).

CONCEPT OF SHUKSHMA AND STHULA SHARIR

According to *Sarira Traya*, the doctrine of the three bodies in Hinduism, the human being is composed of three *shariras* or bodies emanating from Brahman by avidya, ignorance. They are often equated with the five encases, which cover or wrap the *aatman*. The three bodies doctrine is essential in Indian philosophy. It is *nirvikalpa rupam*, an undifferentiated form (Bahder and Bahder, 2013). It originates with *avidya*, ignorance of the real identity of the atman, instead of giving birth to the notion of the *jiva*. The causal body is considered the most complex of the three bodies. It comprises the impressions of the experience that emerge from it. In addition, there are some other important topics as given below can be studied (Nanda, 2000).

1. Concept of *Asthira ojas* in *Ashtam masa* of *garbhini*.
2. Ayurveda concepts of organogenesis during the embryonic period.
3. Ayurveda recommends engaging in *Punsavan karma* (medicine for healthy progeny) and adhering to *Garbhini paricharya* (regimen for fetus development) throughout pregnancy (Trikamji, 1996). The impact of *Punsavan karma* and *Garbhini paricharya* on fetal growth and development can be investigated through prospective studies.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda appears as a mystery to modern medical scientists. Research activity on the subject of *Rachana Sharir* can help clarify the concepts given in different Ayurvedic books. Hence, a detailed knowledge of the basic concept of *Rachana Sharir* will definitely help in the current scenario. In Ayurveda, *Rachana Sharir* requires more attention and opens up new avenues for research in the holistic health care system. This will allow students to properly understand the fundamental concepts of the human body that will be beneficial for society.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare(s) no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION

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